ブラッドハーレーの馬車

沙村広明

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BRADHERLEY'S COACH

ブラッドハーレーの馬車

沙村広明
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Chapter 1

見返り峠の小唄坂

LOOKING BACK AT HOME

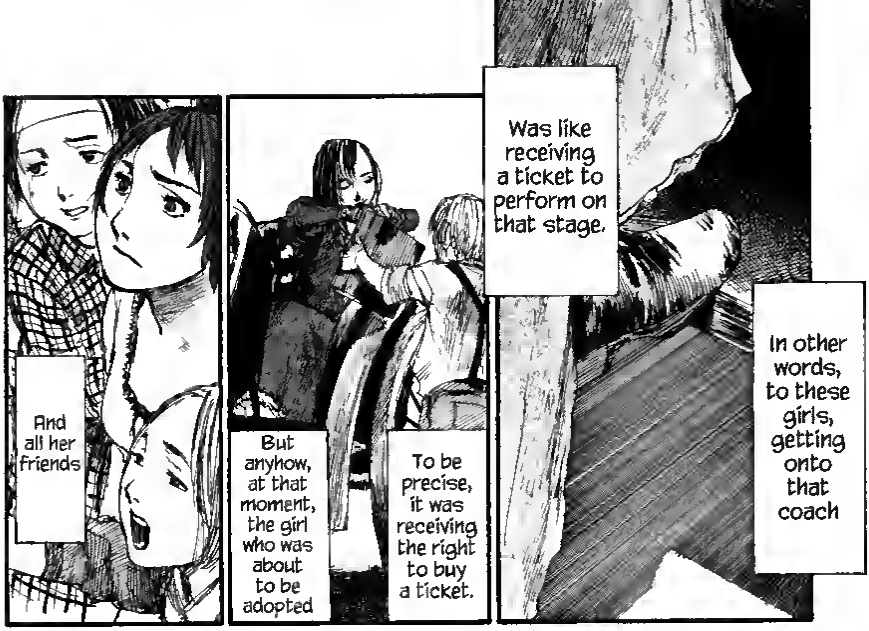
This year, the one chosen from the Willows orphanage was Diana.
TAKE CARE, DIANA!
CONGRATS, DIANA!
DI! THAT DRESS IS BEAUTIFUL!
DON'T FORGET TO COME BACK AND PLAY WITH US!
YOU'LL WRITE, WON'T YOU, DI?

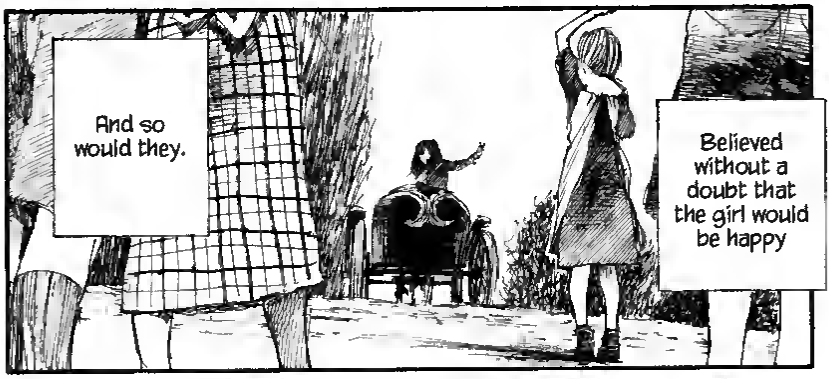
AHEM
...I'M SURE YOU'LL BE CHOSEN NEXT YEAR, CORDELIA.
I'M SORRY. PLEASE LET ME SAY GOODBYE TO THE TEACHERS FIRST.
AHH... GO AHEAD.
THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER ME THESE 14 YEARS.
MS REBECCA, MR SLOAN.

"Bradherley" — the 4th richest noble family in this country.
TODAY, I'LL BE ADOPTED INTO THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY.
The present head of the family is Nicola A. Bradherley, a member of the House of Lords.
But such things weren't what the children cared about ...
The girls were drawn to that name for another reason altogether.

Once a year, the teachers would bring the children to watch them. Words cannot express how much their little hearts were thrilled by the performance.
The Bradherley Episcopal Opera Troupe —
And one more thing —
every year, at the end of the night, the newest members of the troupe would make their debut.
The crowded stage was like a cold gust of air in the morning, instantly melting the frozen dreams of the night before.

That they all used to be orphans —
3 or 4 young ladies would take the stage... all of them Bradherley's foster daughters. And rumor had it

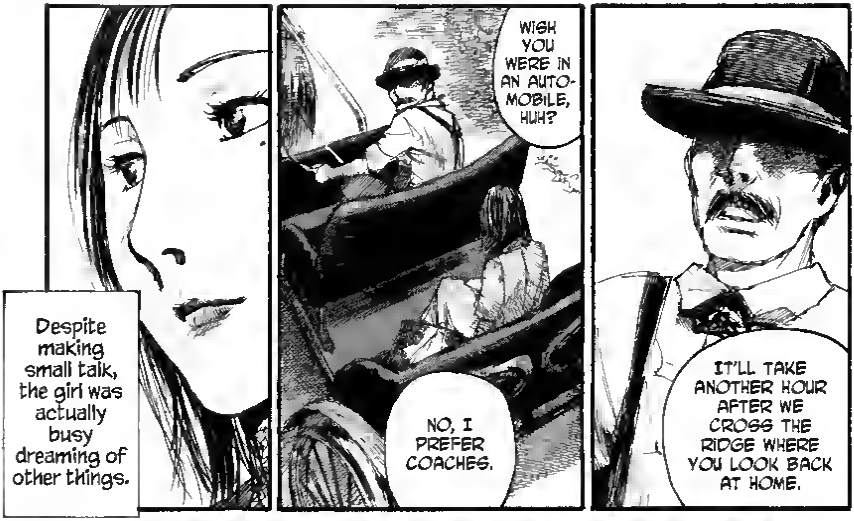

In other words, to these girls, getting onto that coach
Was like receiving a ticket to perform on that stage.
To be precise, it was receiving the right to buy a ticket.
But anyhow, at that moment, the girl who was about to be adopted
And all her friends


Believed without a doubt that the girl would be happy
And so would they.

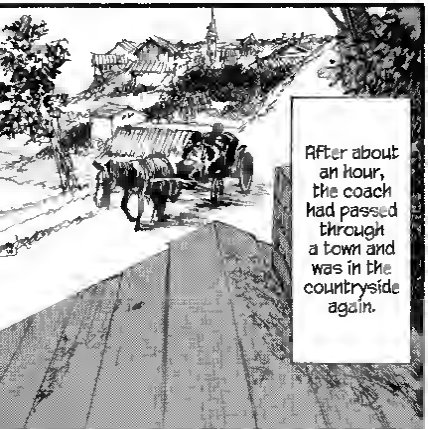
..IT'S STRANGE, I DON'T FEEL SAD AT ALL
DIANA LOOKED REALLY PRETTY TODAY...

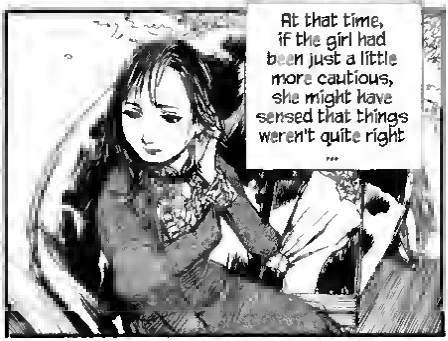
!
NEXT YEAR, I'LL...
BUT IT'S A PROMISE!
MS REBECCA!
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF, MA'AM.
AH..! CORDELIA,
I DIDN'T MEAN FOR YOU TO SEE ME LIKE THIS...

... MA'AM...
BECAUSE DIANA WILL BE HAPPY WHERE SHE'S GOING.
YESTERDAY... I DECIDED I WOULDN'T CRY ANYMORE.
...
...
...
HMM... LET'S SEE.
HOW MUCH FURTHER IS IT TO THE CASTLE?

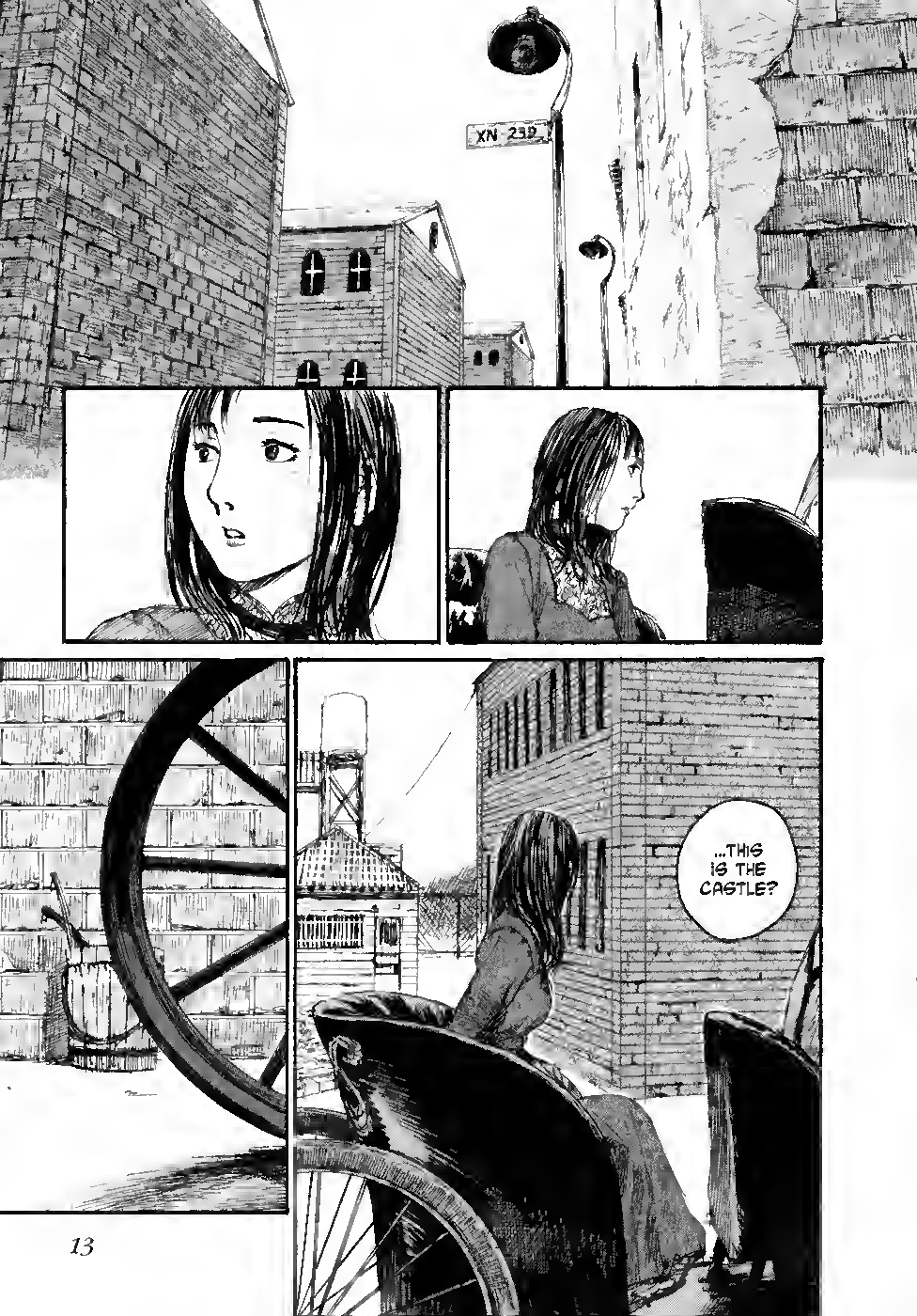

Despite making small talk, the girl was actually busy dreaming of other things.
WISH YOU WERE IN AN AUTO-MOBILE, HUH?
NO, I PREFER COACHES.
IT'LL TAKE ANOTHER HOUR AFTER WE CROSS THE RIDGE WHERE YOU LOOK BACK AT HOME.

Even if I can't be the heroine, I hope they'll give me a role where I can move people like that —
The actress playing the midwife in "Canaan" was amazing.

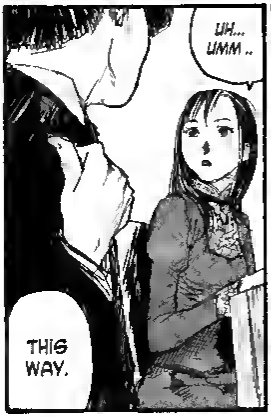

After about an hour, the coach had passed through a town and was in the countryside again.


At that time, if the girl had been just a little more cautious, she might have sensed that things weren't quite right ...

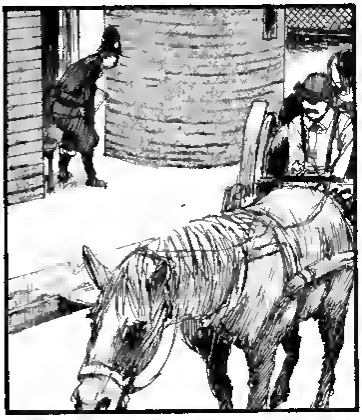
THIS IS...
She had never before seen such strange buildings surrounded by a huge wall.


XN 239
...THIS IS THE CASTLE?

MGRTINTEN
PRISON


UH... UMM..
THIS WAY.

GET DOWN.



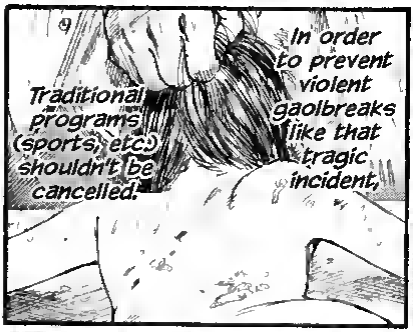
CHANGE INTO THIS.
Y-- YES!
NO MEDICAL PROBLEMS... IS THAT RIGHT?
FROM THE WINDY WILLOWS ORPHAN-AGE...
DIANA FORD...
YES MA'AM!
OK... UMM...
WHEN SHE'S DONE HERE, WALTER...

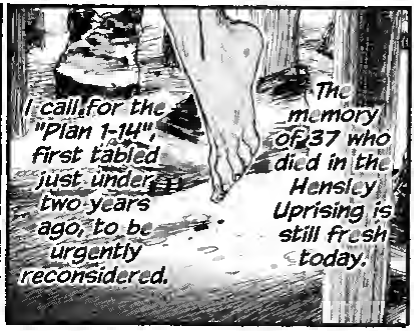
AH... AHHH ...
WAIT! OPEN UP...
SLAM
...HUH!?
...come to think of it, from the very beginning, she did have the feeling that things weren't quite right.

Girls from orphanages across the country were adopted into the Bradherley family to be trained for the opera troupe.
But the number of new girls announced every year
Was never more than 4 — what about the others?
What happened to the girls who didn't make it onto that stage?
"Paschal lambs"
Apparently that's what the girls who came here were called —

UHH...
HANG ON! I'M NEXT!
AH...
YOU'RE TAKING TOO LONG DAMMIT! IT'S MY TURN!

Summary of the discussion when "Plan 1-14" was resubmitted —
WHADDYA CALL ME?!
HOLD HER PROPERLY, IDIOT!


Traditional programs (sports, etc.) shouldn't be cancelled.
In order to prevent violent gaolbreaks like that tragic incident,

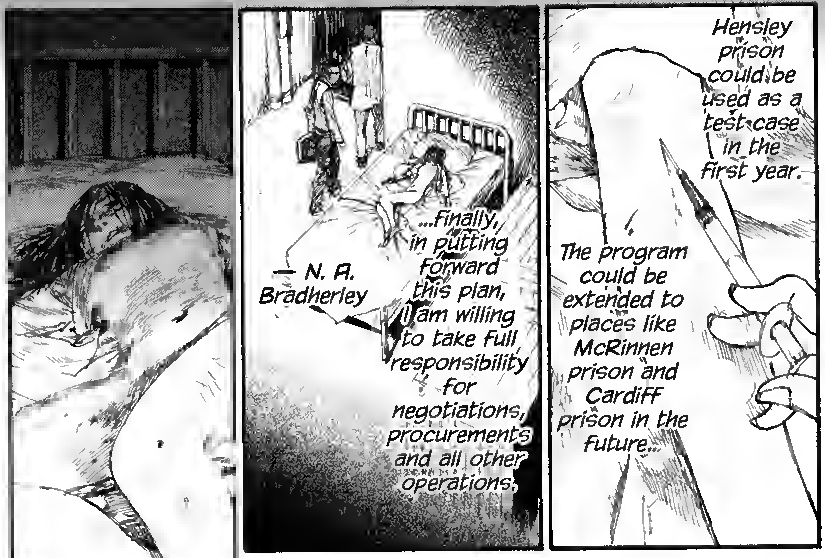

I call for the "Plan 1-14" first tabled just under two years ago, to be urgently reconsidered.
The memory of 37 who died in the Hensley Uprising is still fresh today.

I believe this plan will achieve what is necessary.
Putting questions of morality aside,
Instead, we need to purge the sexual and violent urges of long-term and life prisoners.

- To be carried out annually.

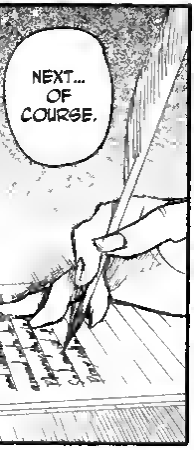
- They'll be procured from orphanages across the country, who will be compensated.
(Church orphanages were excluded. In order to minimize the negative impact, contracts were made with private orphanages experiencing financial difficulties, in exchange for economic assistance. At present, there are arrangements with 8 orphanages.)

- The girls used will be orphans.
(To ensure that girls were not physically underdeveloped, they ought to be at least 13 years old.)

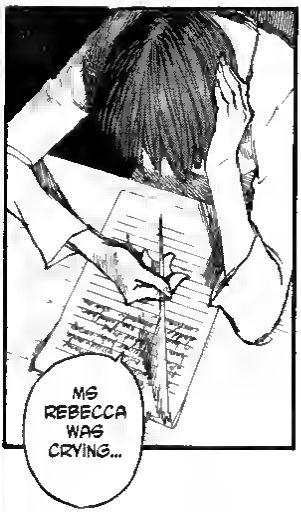

— N. A. Bradherley
...finally, in putting forward this plan, I am willing to take full responsibility for negotiations, procurements and all other operations.
Hensley prison could be used as a test case in the first year.
The program could be extended to places like McRinnen prison and Cardiff prison in the future...

...
...

CANAAN
...


NEXT... OF COURSE.

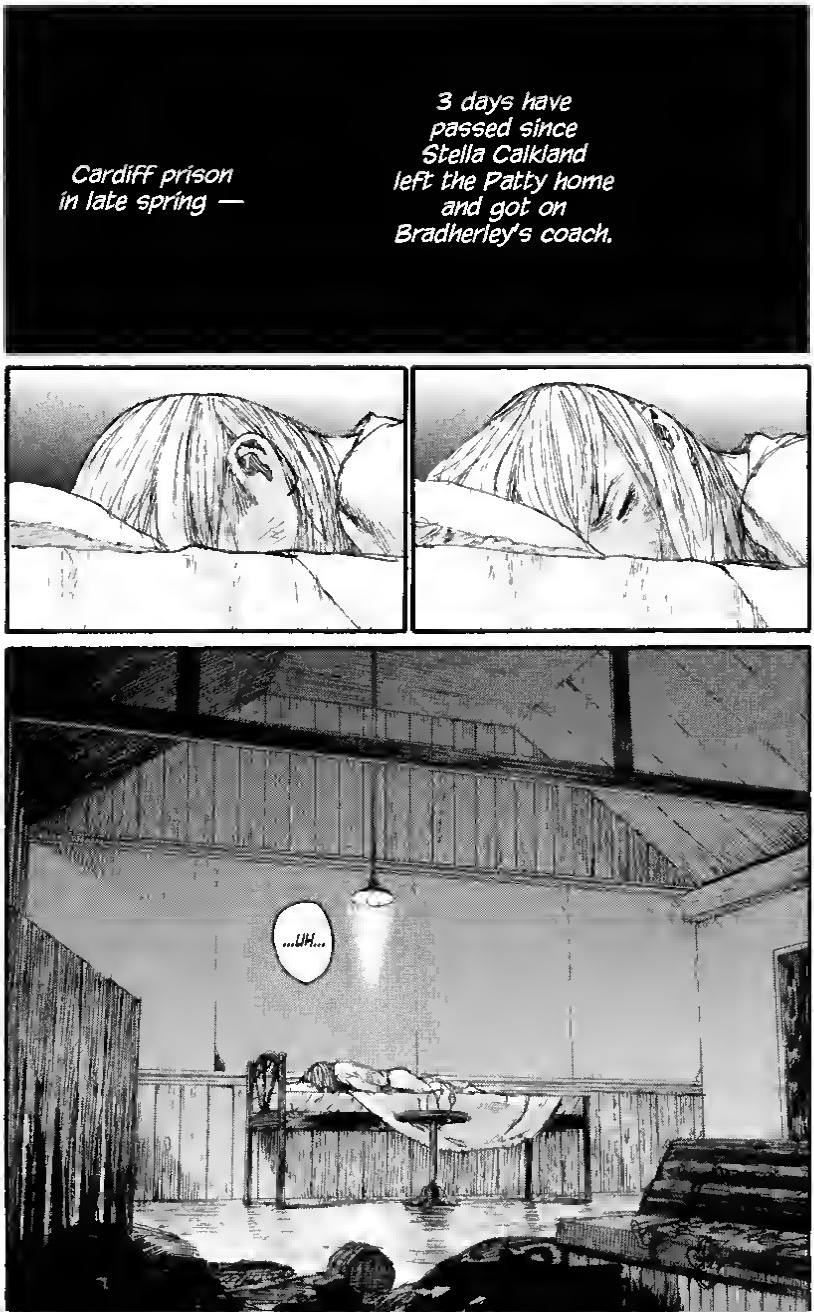
HUH!? YOU'RE WRITING A LETTER ALREADY, CORDY!?
EH HEH HEH, YUP.


MS REBECCA WAS CRYING...

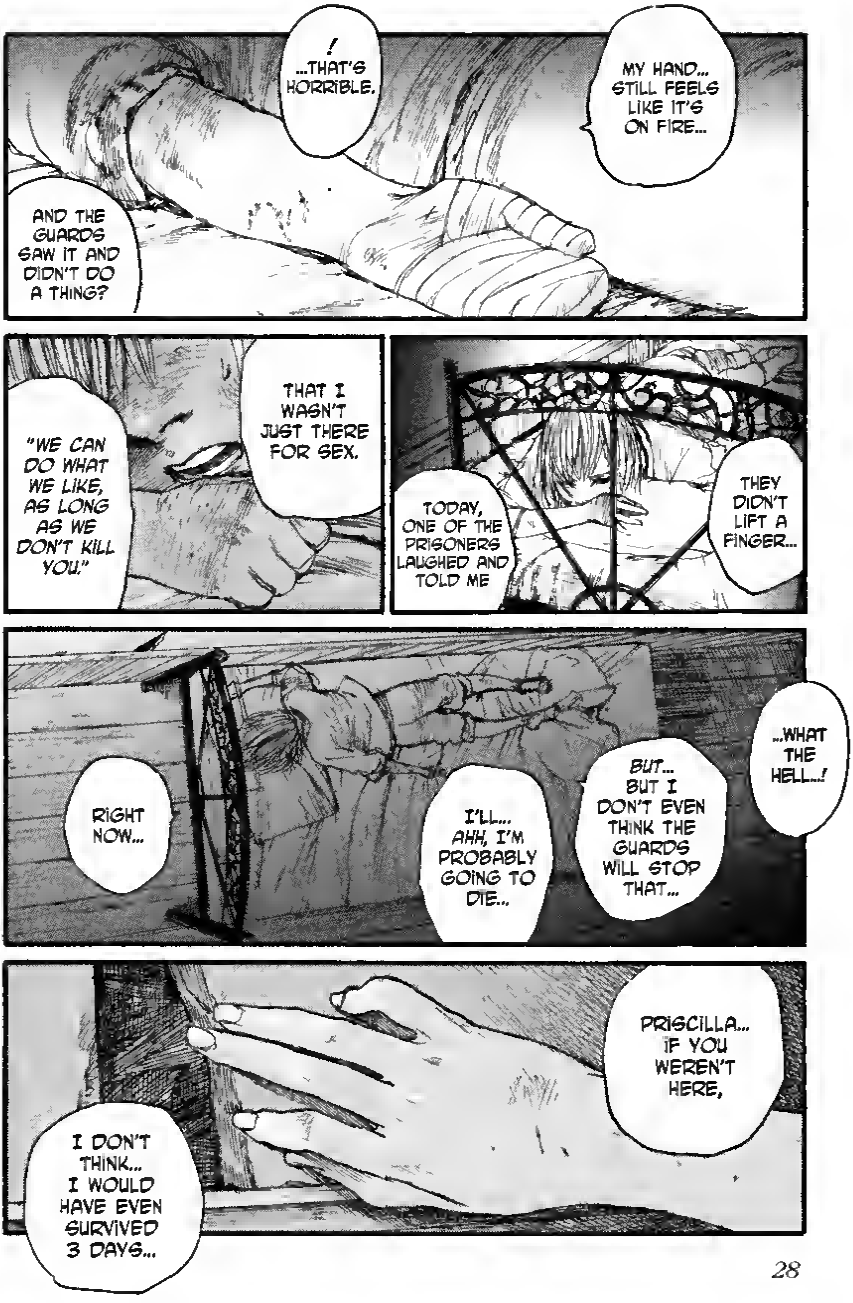
WERE THE WILD ROSES IN BLOOM ON THE RIDGE WHERE YOU LOOK BACK AT HOME?
There's a small but beautiful cluster of wild roses growing on the ridge
Because it looks a lot like the hill on which the Willows is built,
A nearby poplar that's shed all it's flowers looks down on it.
For an instant, all the hopes and fears about the future soaking the girl's heart vanish
Along the road between the Willows orphanage and the Bradherley castle.

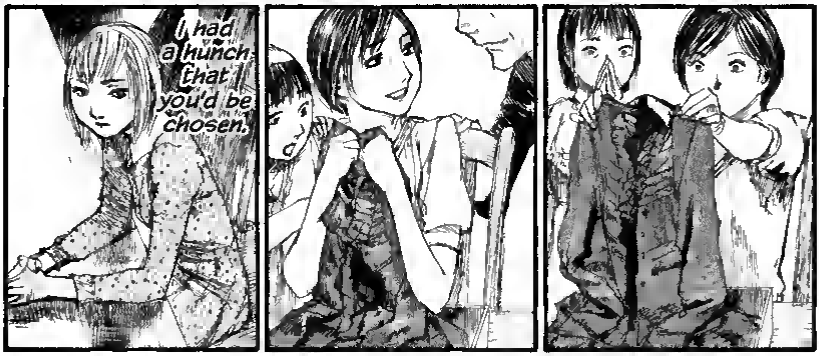
...I WENT TO BUY POTS IN BEZIERS
At that moment, the driver who might be observing her out of the corner of his eye...
And she turns to look back, thinking of the friends she left behind.
BUT THE SHOP HAD CLOSED
SO I TOOK THE CITY'S MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL
Though gruff and out of tune, the driver's singing makes her smile.
And that's why people call it the ridge where you look back at home.
END

Chapter 2
友達
FRIEND

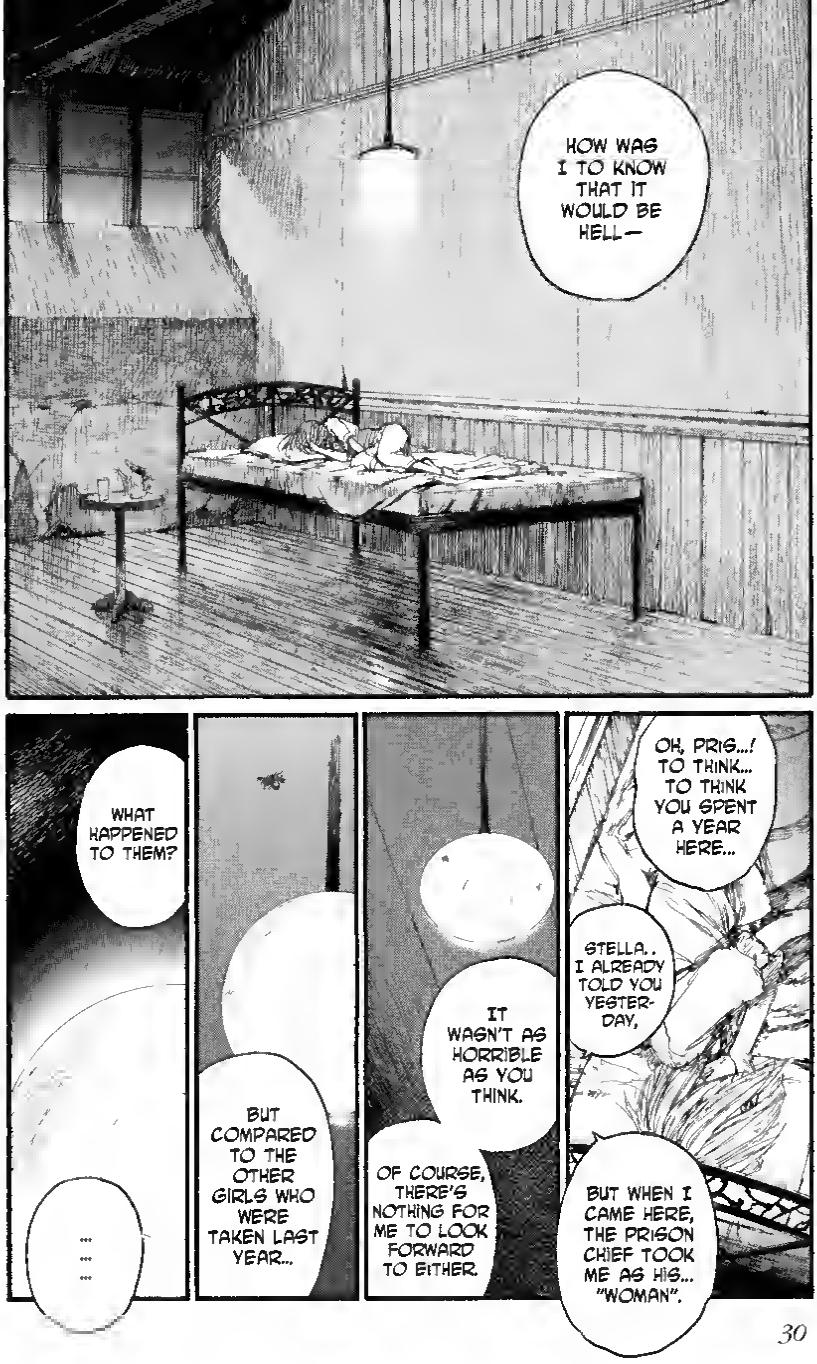

Cardiff prison
in late spring —
3 days have
passed since
Stella Calkland
left the Patty home
and got on
Bradherley's coach.
...UH...

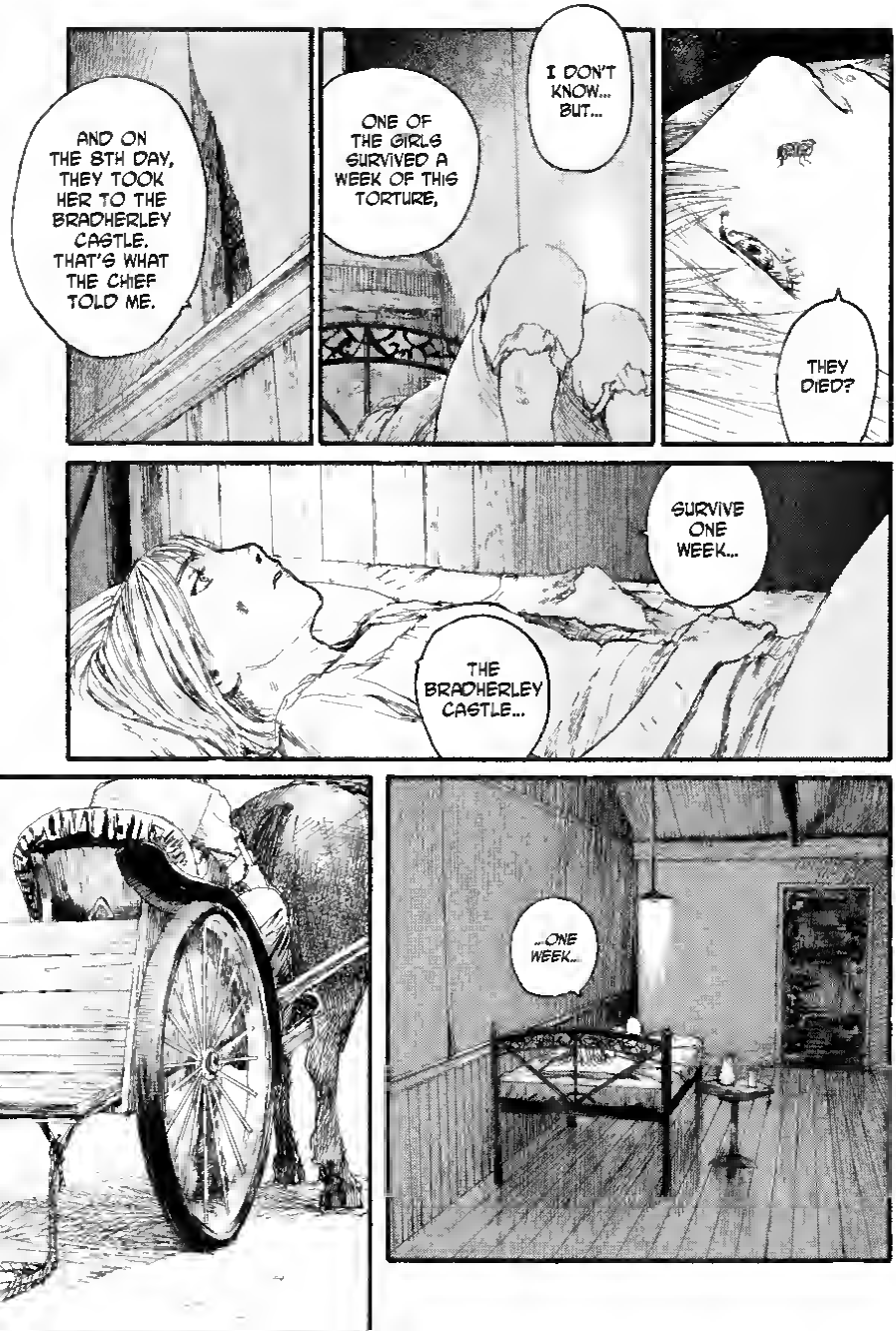
PRISCILLA... ARE YOU THERE, PRISCILLA?
I'M HERE, STELLA
THANK GOODNESS
SO YOU GOT TODAY OFF...
YESTERDAY, I DIDN'T HEAR YOUR VOICE UNTIL LATE AT NIGHT...
YEAH.. HE MAKES ME WORK AT NIGHT.
IS THE CHIEF... KIND?
NOT AT ALL. HE'S A BEAST.
BUT... HE LETS ME GO AFTER HE'S DONE WITH ME.
I'M NOT AS BADLY OFF AS YOU.
OH STELLA... COMPARED TO THE PAIN YOU GO THROUGH ...
THEY BROKE MY FINGERS TODAY.
ALL THE FINGERS ON MY LEFT HAND...

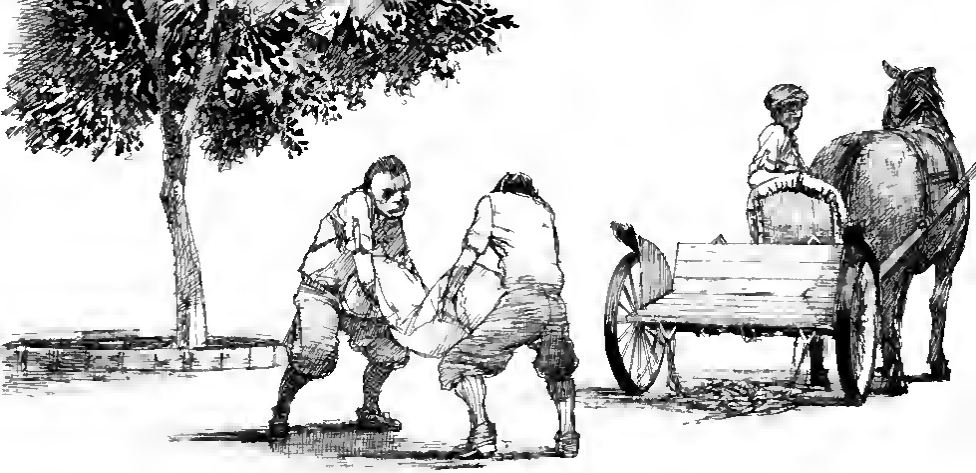

MY HAND... STILL FEELS LIKE IT'S ON FIRE...
!
...THAT'S HORRIBLE.
AND THE GUARDS SAW IT AND DIDN'T DO A THING?
THEY DIDN'T LIFT A FINGER...
TODAY, ONE OF THE PRISONERS LAUGHED AND TOLD ME
THAT I WASN'T JUST THERE FOR SEX.
"WE CAN DO WHAT WE LIKE, AS LONG AS WE DON'T KILL YOU."
...WHAT THE HELL...!
BUT... BUT I DON'T EVEN THINK THE GUARDS WILL STOP THAT...
I'LL... AHH, I'M PROBABLY GOING TO DIE...
RIGHT NOW...
PRISCILLA... IF YOU WEREN'T HERE,
I DON'T THINK... I WOULD HAVE EVEN SURVIVED 3 DAYS...

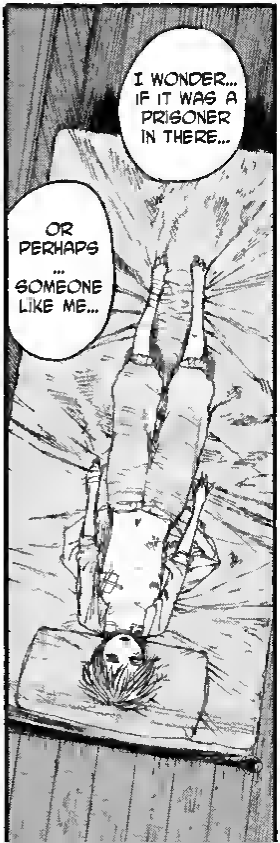

I had a hunch that you'd be chosen.

That's why I was overjoyed when they called me this year.
It was eating me up inside... y'know? I'm sure you knew.
I didn't like it... though, I smiled and cheered for you.


HOW WAS I TO KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE HELL—
WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
...
BUT COMPARED TO THE OTHER GIRLS WHO WERE TAKEN LAST YEAR...
IT WASN'T AS HORRIBLE AS YOU THINK.
OF COURSE, THERE'S NOTHING FOR ME TO LOOK FORWARD TO EITHER.
OH, PRIG...! TO THINK... TO THINK YOU SPENT A YEAR HERE...
STELLA.. I ALREADY TOLD YOU YESTERDAY,
BUT WHEN I CAME HERE, THE PRISON CHIEF TOOK ME AS HIS... "WOMAN".

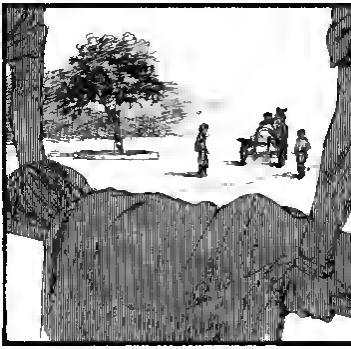

AND ON THE 8TH DAY, THEY TOOK HER TO THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE. THAT'S WHAT THE CHIEF TOLD ME.
ONE OF THE GIRLS SURVIVED A WEEK OF THIS TORTURE,
I DON'T KNOW... BUT...
THEY DIED?
SURVIVE ONE WEEK...
THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE...
...ONE WEEK...




I WONDER... IF IT WAS A PRISONER IN THERE...
OR PERHAPS ... SOMEONE LIKE ME...

...IN THE COURTYARD, I SAW THEM TAKING AWAY ANOTHER BODY BAG TODAY...

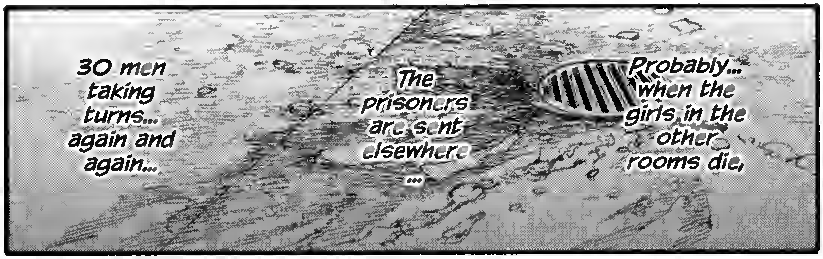
MORE TO THAT SIDE

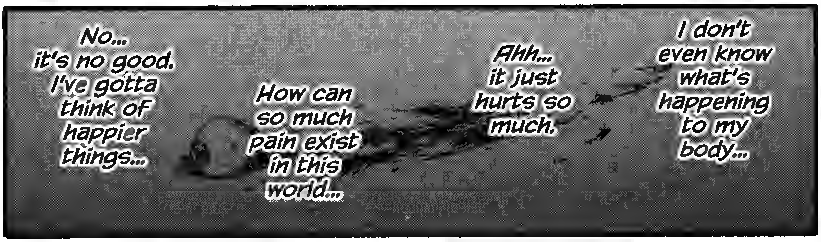


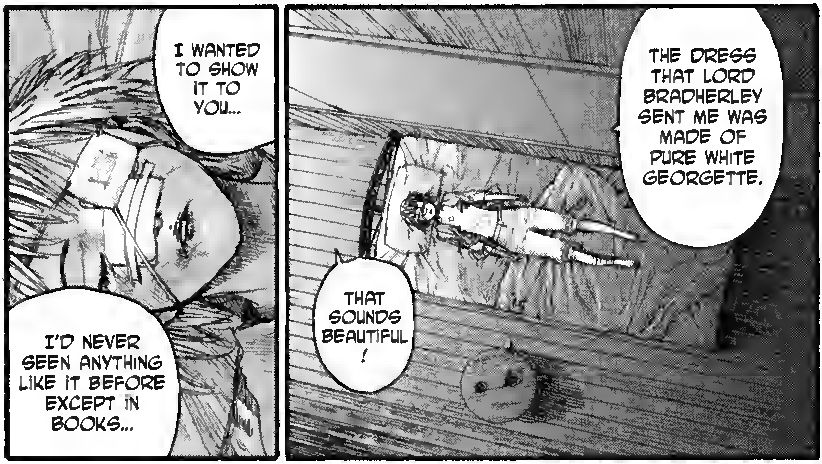
IT WAS "OTHELLO" THAT TIME, RIGHT?
HOW COULD I FORGET?
DO YOU REMEMBER THE GOLDEN CEDAR FESTIVAL THE YEAR BEFORE LAST, PRISCILLA?
AH... NO, NO.
I'VE GOTTA THINK OF HAPPIER THINGS.
WE'VE BOTH LET EACH OTHER TAKE THE ROLE OF THE HEROINE MANY TIMES BEFORE,
BUT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THE TWO OF US PLAYED THE LEAD CHARACTER AND THE HEROINE TOGETHER ON STAGE.
THAT WAS MS MARIA'S FAULT! AH, I SHOULDN'T BE RUDE.
BUT YOUR DESDEMONA HAD SO MUCH MAKE-UP ON!
AND THE COSTUMES THAT WE MADE FROM THE SCRAPS OF CLOTH FROM THE BAZAAR WERE MUCH NICER THAN THE YEAR BEFORE.

WE PRACTICED SO HARD EVERY YEAR FOR OUR PERFORMANCES.
IT'S STRANGE THOUGH.. ALL OF US,
HEE HEE..
HEE HEE HEE..
AND WE WERE GOOD CHILDREN...
WE PRACTICED SO HARD...
...WHY... WHY WEREN'T WE CHOSEN...
THAT ALL THE GIRLS IN THE OPERA TROUPE WERE ORPHANS... WAS IT... TRUE?
NO... IN THAT FIRST PLACE, THAT RUMOR...
THE TEACHERS ... PROBABLY DIDN'T SUSPECT A THING...
OR MAYBE...

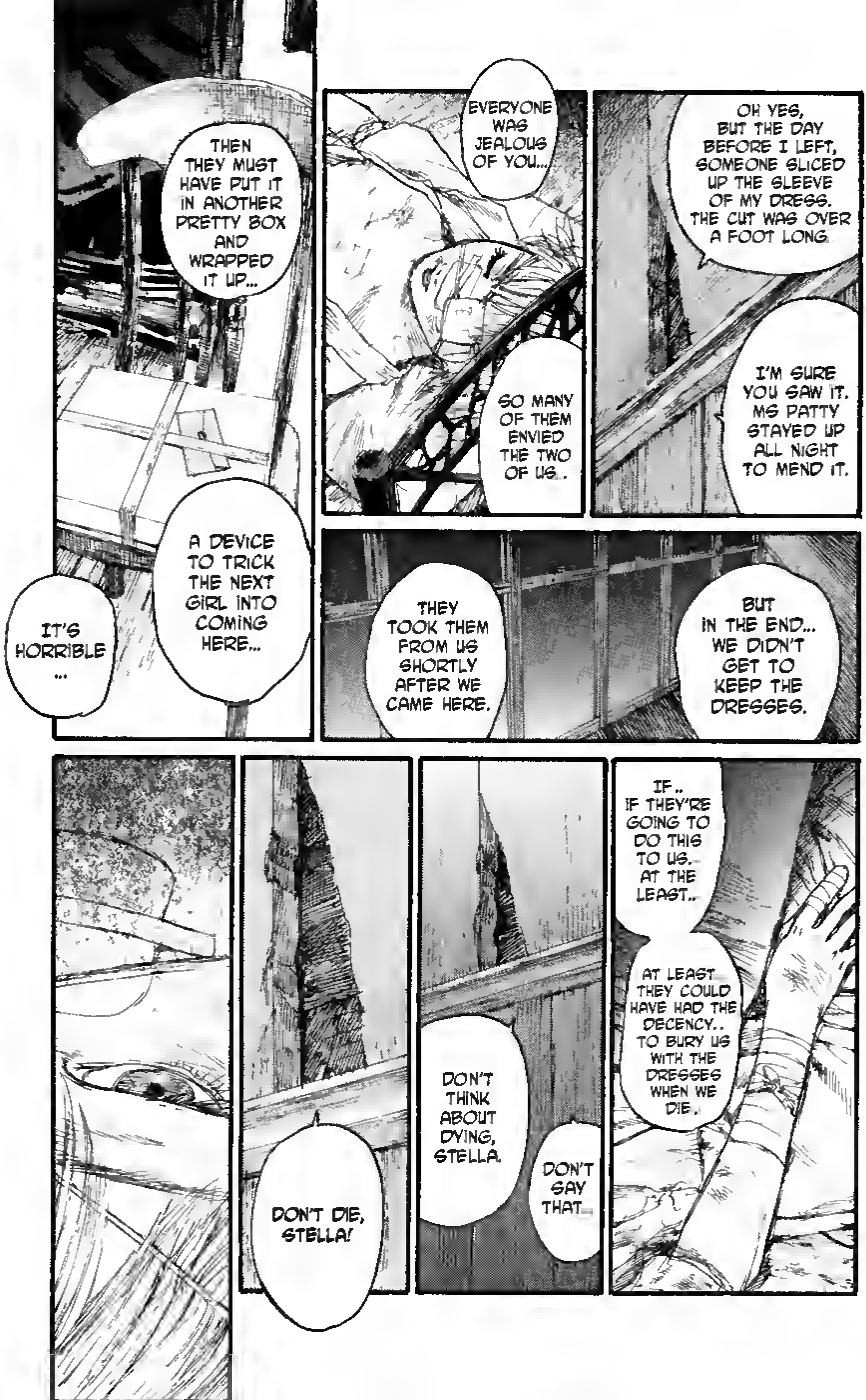
OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDER!
OW! YOU IDIOT!
UH.. OH...
HEY, DON'T BREAK HER ARM AND SPOIL HER!
There were about half the number on the first day...
There must have been at least 30 of them...


30 men taking turns... again and again...
The prisoners are sent elsewhere...
Probably... when the girls in the other rooms die,


No... it's no good. I've gotta think of happier things...
How can so much pain exist in this world...
Ahh... it just hurts so much.
I don't even know what's happening to my body...

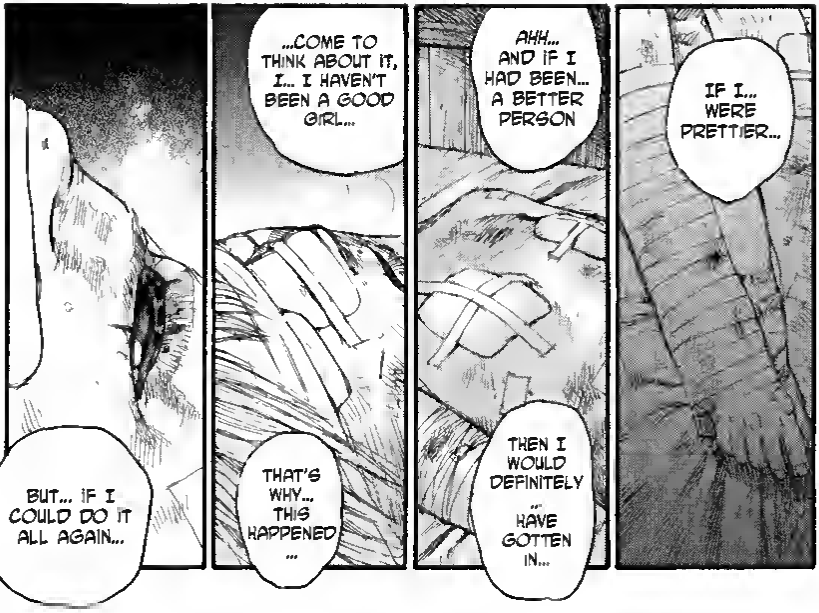

I WANTED TO SHOW IT TO YOU...
I'D NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE EXCEPT IN BOOKS...
THE DRESS THAT LORD BRADHERLEY SENT ME WAS MADE OF PURE WHITE GEORGETTE.
THAT SOUNDS BEAUTIFUL!

BUT PRIS, THE BROWN GLORIA DRESS YOU GOT WAS GORGEOUS TOO.
IT WAS REALLY SOME-THING.
IT MUST HAVE LOOKED BEAUTIFUL, A PURE WHITE DRESS WITH YOUR GOLDEN HAIR.


EVERYONE WAS JEALOUS OF YOU...
SO MANY OF THEM ENVIED THE TWO OF US.
OH YES, BUT THE DAY BEFORE I LEFT, SOMEONE SLICED UP THE SLEEVE OF MY DRESS. THE CUT WAS OVER A FOOT LONG.
I'M SURE YOU SAW IT. MS PATTY STAYED UP ALL NIGHT TO MEND IT.
THEN THEY MUST HAVE PUT IT IN ANOTHER PRETTY BOX AND WRAPPED IT UP...
A DEVICE TO TRICK THE NEXT GIRL INTO COMING HERE...
IT'S HORRIBLE ...
THEY TOOK THEM FROM US SHORTLY AFTER WE CAME HERE.
BUT IN THE END... WE DIDN'T GET TO KEEP THE DRESSES.
IF.. IF THEY'RE GOING TO DO THIS TO US.. AT THE LEAST..
AT LEAST.. THEY COULD HAVE HAD THE DECENCY.. TO BURY US WITH THE DRESSES WHEN WE DIE.
DON'T THINK ABOUT DYING, STELLA.
DON'T SAY THAT...
DON'T DIE, STELLA!

ALL THE OTHER GIRLS ALREADY ...
BUT SHE DID WELL TO LAST SO LONG.
SHE'S AT HER LIMIT.
...BUT WELL, MAYBE THEY'RE THE LUCKY ONES—
68 PEOPLE, HUH...

HEY... PRISCILLA... ABOUT THAT RUMOR...
I REALLY... THINK IT'S TRUE...
W- WE COULD REALLY... HAVE BEEN PART OF IT...
PART OF THAT OPERA TROUPE...


IF I... WERE PRETTIER...
AHH... AND IF I HAD BEEN... A BETTER PERSON
...COME TO THINK ABOUT IT, I... I HAVEN'T BEEN A GOOD GIRL...
BUT... IF I COULD DO IT ALL AGAIN...
THAT'S WHY... THIS HAPPENED ...
THEN I WOULD DEFINITELY ... HAVE GOTTEN IN...

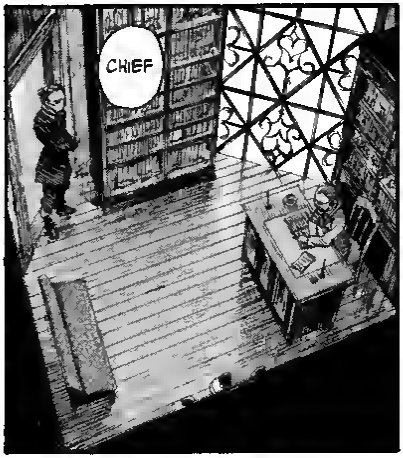
GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, STELLA! IT'S ALREADY BEEN 6 DAYS!
IF YOU CAN LAST ANOTHER DAY, YOU'LL DEFINITELY GET OUT OF HERE!
JUST ONE MORE DAY! STAY ALIVE AND YOU CAN LEAVE!
LEAVE THIS PLACE ALIVE, STELLA!
YOU'RE . REALLY..
THANK YOU, PRIS... YOU'RE SO KIND...
YEAH, LEAVE HERE..
I CUT UP THE SLEEVE OF YOUR DRESS, YOU KNOW...

...I SAID IT...
I FINALLY SAID IT...
I'VE WANTED TO CONFESS SINCE FOREVER...
ALL THROUGH... THIS LAST YEAR...
I'M SORRY... I'M SO SORRY, PRISCILLA ...
EVEN THOUGH... YOU WERE... MY BEST FRIEND...
I KNEW,
STELLA.

SO-
I FORGAVE YOU A YEAR AGO, STELLA.
BUT YOU KNOW... I SAID TO MYSELF. IF STELLA DID IT, I FORGIVE HER.
I FIGURED IT OUT A YEAR AGO.
I'M SORRY..
THANK YOU.
OHH... PRISCILLA,
THANK YOU.
I'M SORRY..
THANK YOU
I'M SORRY
I'M SORRY

—
I SEE.

SO ALL THE GIRLS FROM THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM ARE NOW...
STELLA CALKLAND WAS FOUND DEAD THIS MORNING AT 8:10 AM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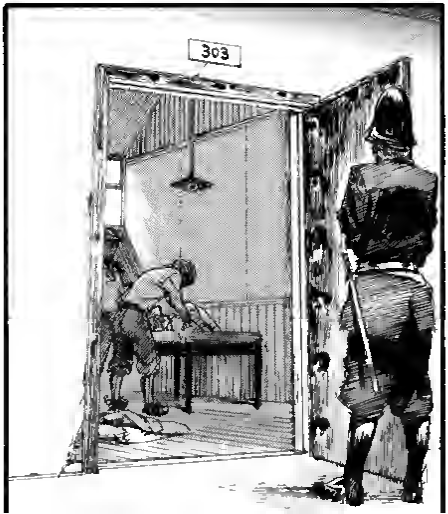
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WELL, GET THE USUAL TEAM TO TAKE CARE OF IT.

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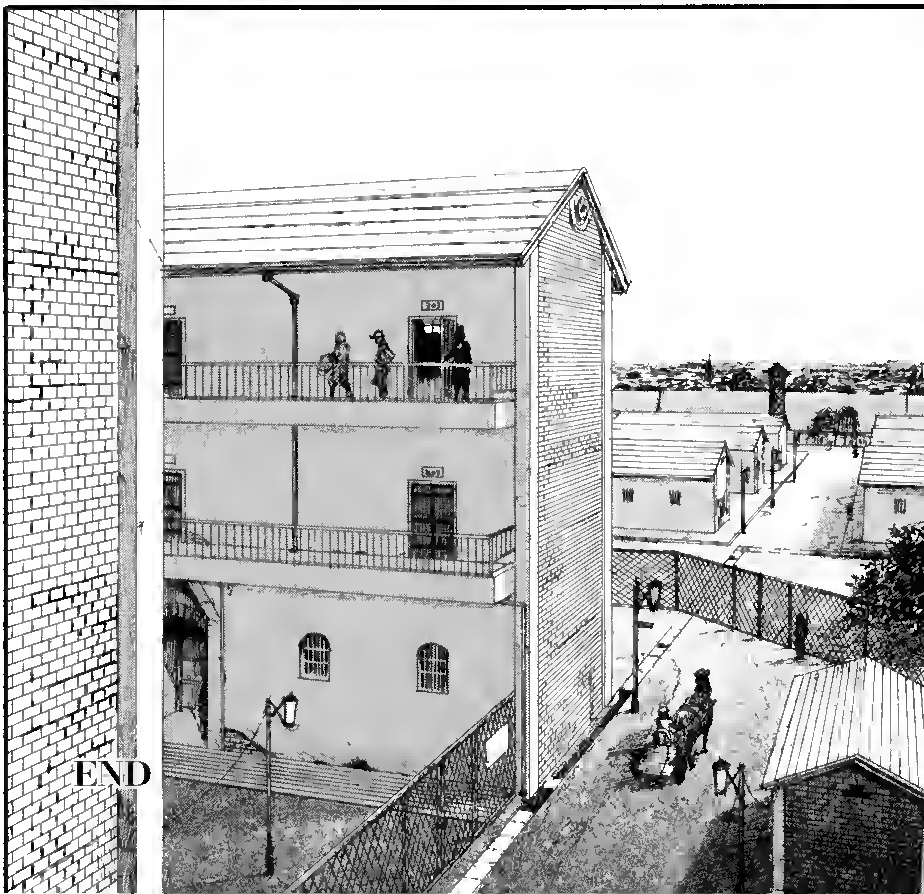
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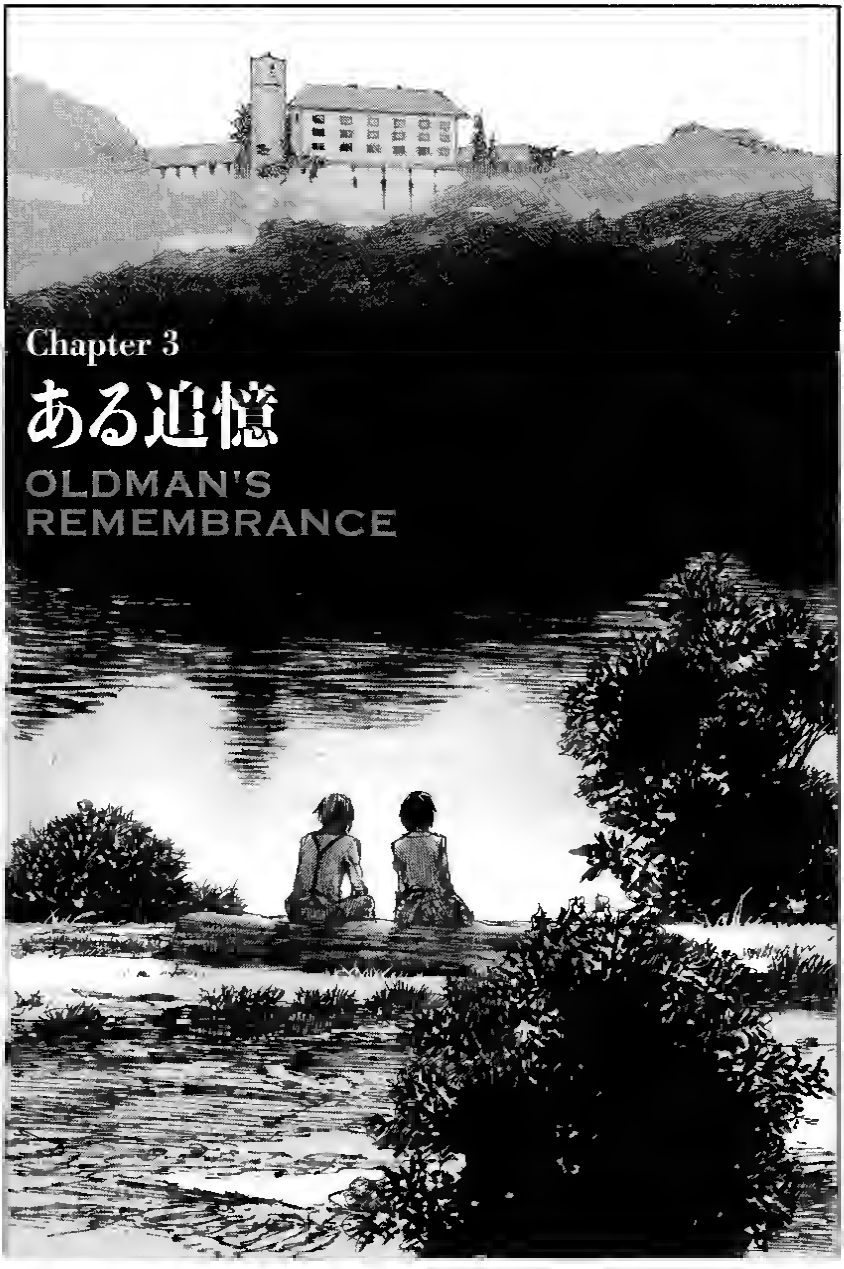
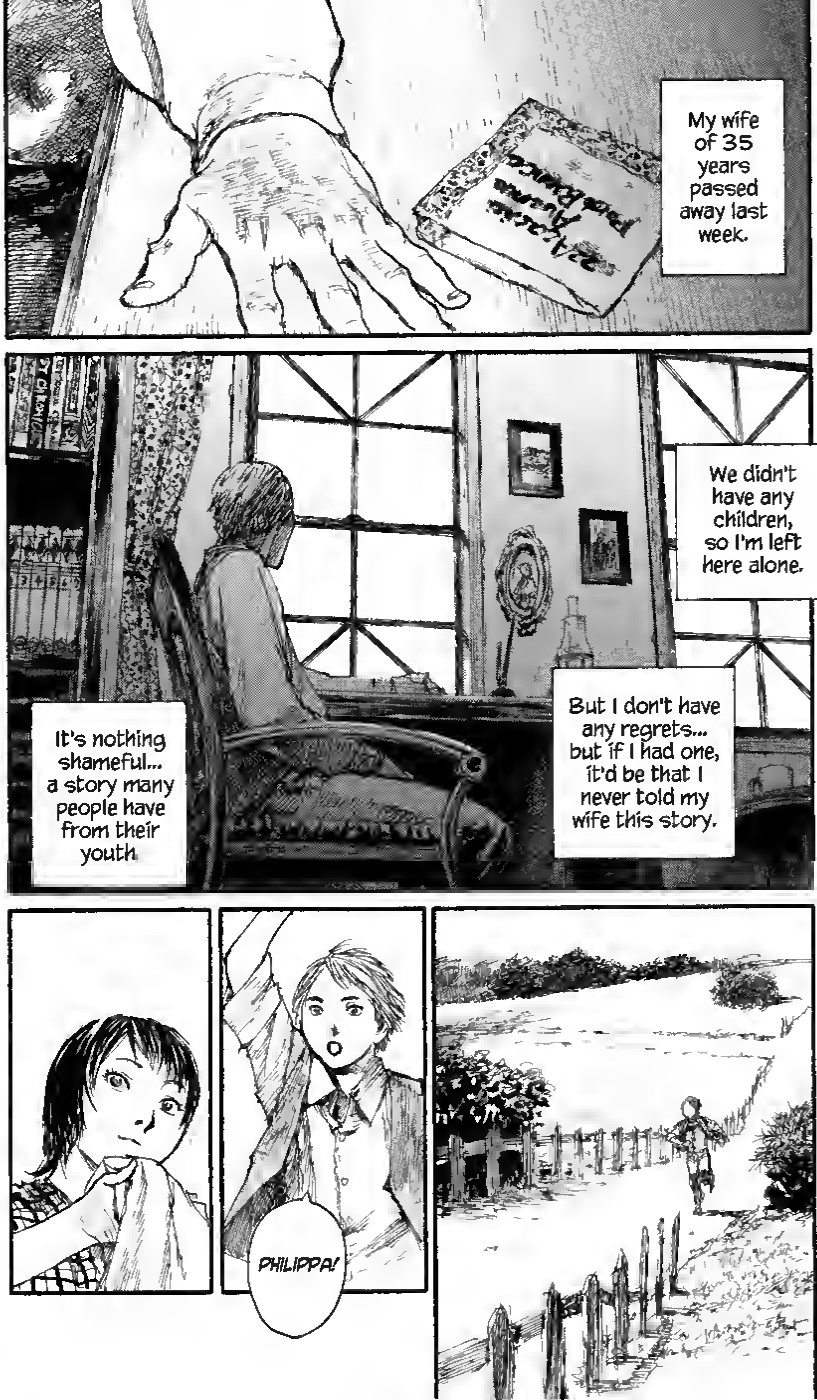


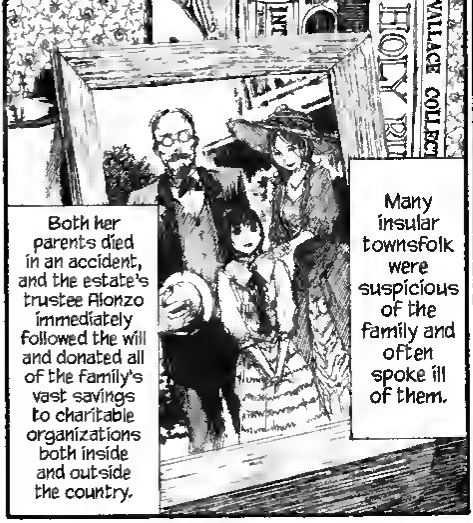
Chapter 3

ある追憶

OLDMAN'S REMEMBRANCE


My wife of 35 years passed away last week.
We didn't have any children, so I'm left here alone.
But I don't have any regrets... but if I had one, it'd be that I never told my wife this story.
It's nothing shameful... a story many people have from their youth
PHILIPPA!

I'VE GOT TO WAIT TILL IT DRIES, JONAS.
At that time, on a hill near my parents' home, there was a small orphanage called "Near the Road".
ENOUGH, DON'T BE SO CRUDE.
WHISTLE
LOOK! THE FARMER'S SON AND THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER ARE HAVING THEIR ALONE TIME AGAIN!
WELL, I THOUGHT ABOUT IT SOME MORE, AND I DON'T WANT TO TOUCH IT.
As the kids at the orphanage said,
BUT YOU ASKED ME TO MAKE ONE FOR YOU...!
EWW, THAT'S GROSS.
LOOK PHILIPPA, I MADE A FROG SKIN NECKLACE FOR YOU.


Both her parents died in an accident, and the estate's trustee Alonzo immediately followed the will and donated all of the family's vast savings to charitable organizations both inside and outside the country.
Many insular townsfolk were suspicious of the family and often spoke ill of them.

Her grandfather came here from somewhere in Eastern Europe.
Before Philippa Vassiley came to "Near the Road", she was the only daughter of a leading merchant in this town.

It was obvious how much the family was hated... but most pitiful of all was the daughter, who became penniless at an early age.
The will was obviously a fake, but instead of blaming the trustee, people unanimously praised him for his extreme sense of justice.

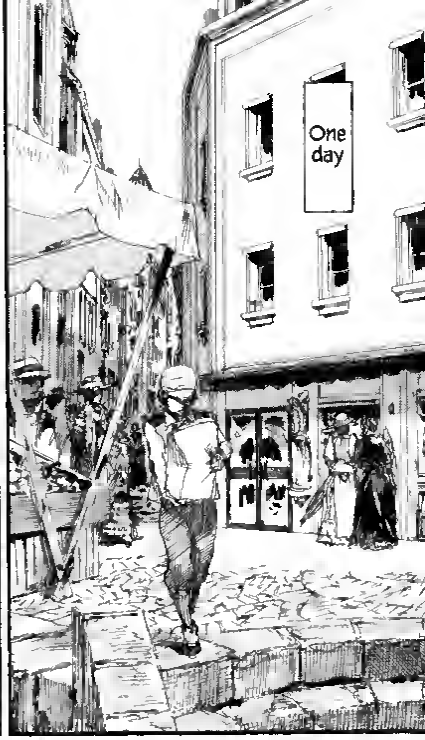
Sunday
—
after praying, we would head to the lake shore with the communion bread from church in hand.

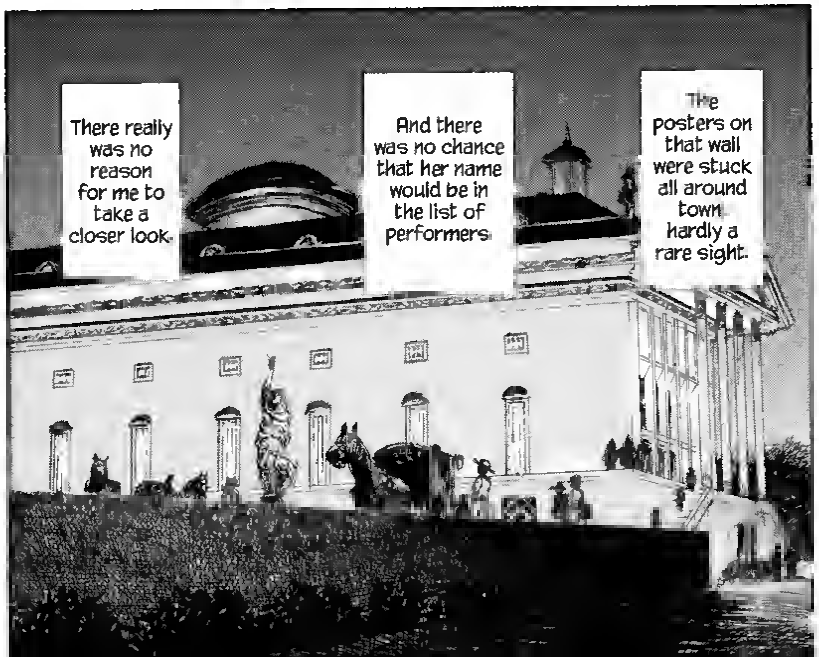
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO BLUNT!
The day would go by as we talked about silly things.
BUT I MIGHT MARRY A GOVERN-MENT OFFICIAL.
HOW ABOUT A FARMER?
NOT A CHANCE!
I DON'T WANT TO BE A MERCHANT, NO MATTER HOW RICH!
BEING ADOPTED INTO THE NOBILITY... HOW WONDERFUL WOULD THAT BE?
MAYBE THEY'LL TAKE ME INTO THE BRADHERLEY OPERA TROUPE...
I'M REALLY GOOD AT SINGING, Y'KNOW.
One day ...
OH?
?
I foolishly believed that those times would go on forever.

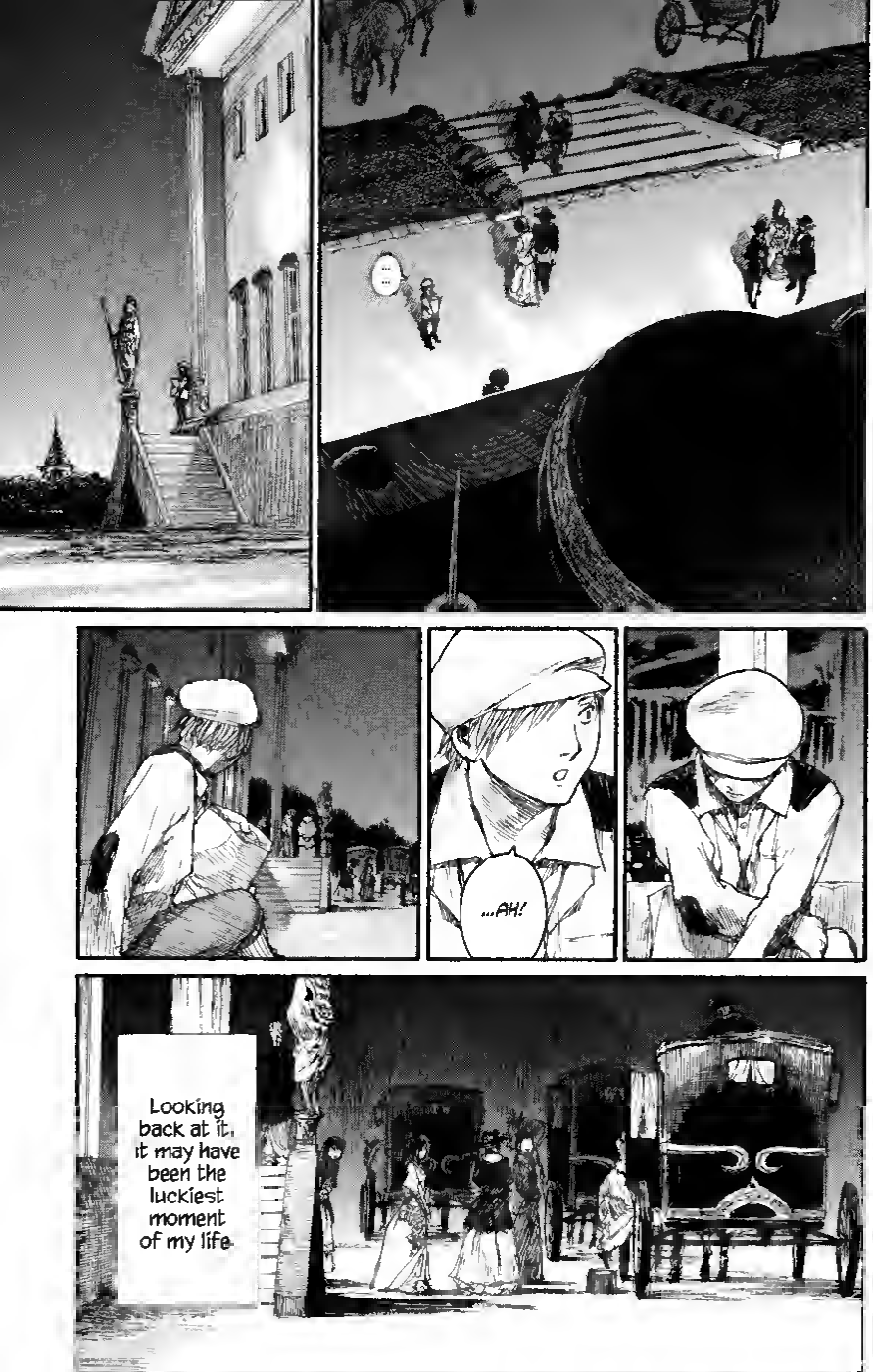
PHILIPPA.
BOW
...
...
...
I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU. COME TO MY ROOM LATER.
BOW
A GUEST ...
One week later

...it feels like I'm talking about what happened in a dream.
I was so carefree, but that day... I couldn't even remember just how beautiful she looked when I first met her.
I still find it difficult to believe that that capricious noble would adopt random girls for his opera troupe.
...but he wasn't very successful; he was too simple a man...
He was a merchant.
2 years later
—
my father had passed away, and my uncle Spencer Burgh took me under his wing.

...!

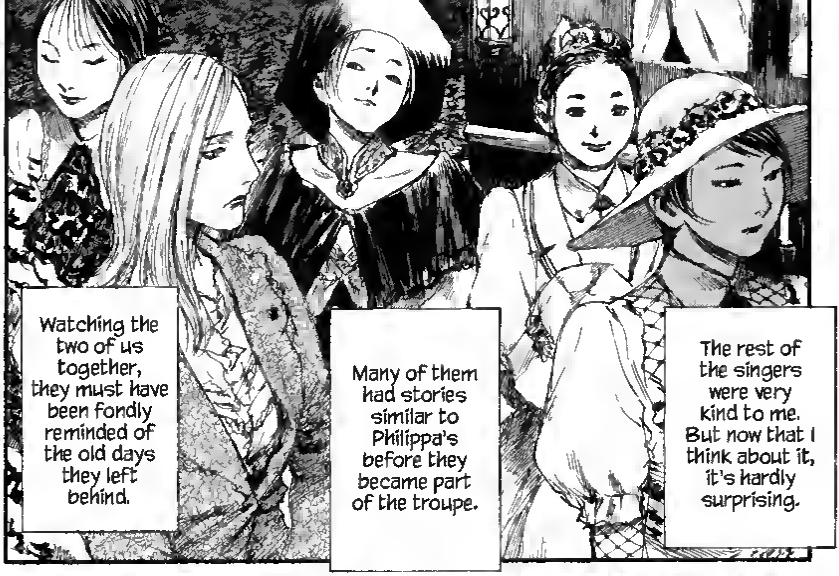

One day


There really was no reason for me to take a closer look.
And there was no chance that her name would be in the list of performers.
The posters on that wall were stuck all around town. Hardly a rare sight.


...
...
...AH!
Looking back at it, it may have been the luckiest moment of my life.

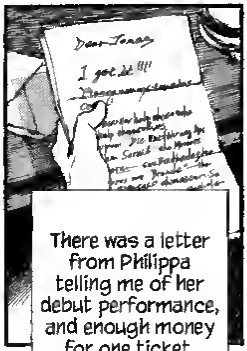
PHILIPPA!
JONAS!
WHAT A SURPRISE... YOU CAME TO SEE ME!?
NO... I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WERE PERFORMING.
THIS OPERA JUST DEBUTED!

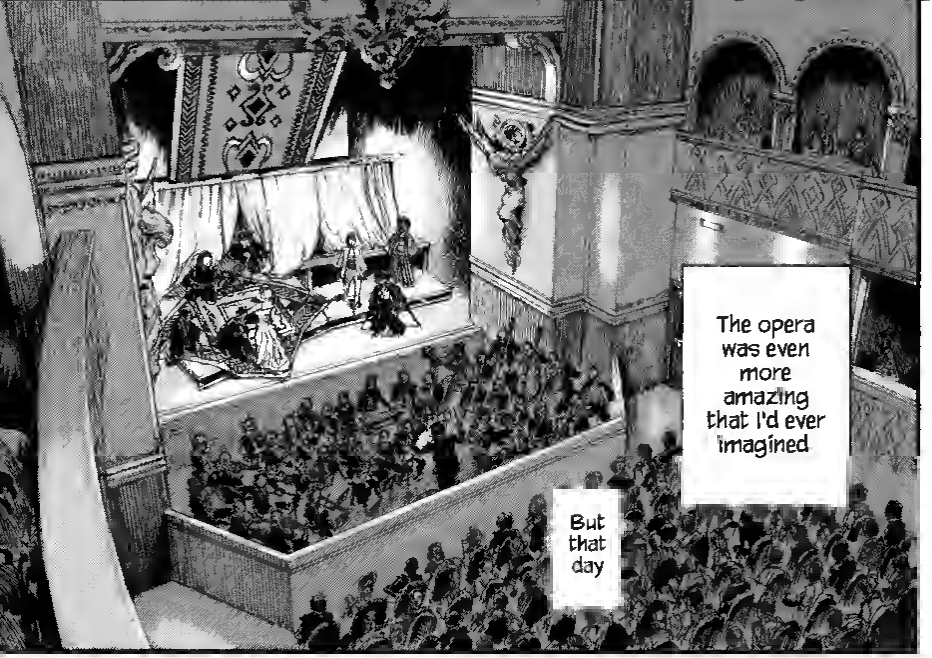
MS PHILIPPA... WE HAVE TO GO.
AH, OKAY!
YEAH... BUT CAN I GO IN DRESSED LIKE THIS?
YOU HAVE TO SAVE UP SO YOU CAN SEE ME NEXT TIME!
DON'T WORRY, OUR TROUPE ENCOURAGES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO COME
I WAS SO NERVOUS AND I COULDN'T REALLY SEE THE AUDIENCE...
OH JONAS! I'LL NEVER FORGET TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE IN MY LIFE!
That she spoke as if those past 2 years hadn't gone by.
I felt a little disap-pointed
MIGG! HURRY UP!
CALM DOWN...
From that day, I found various excuses to be in town about one out of every three days when there was a performance on.


Watching the two of us together, they must have been fondly reminded of the old days they left behind.
Many of them had stories similar to Philippa's before they became part of the troupe.
The rest of the singers were very kind to me. But now that I think about it, it's hardly surprising.

JO! IT'S FOR YOU.
Some months later

..I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING SUITABLE TO WEAR

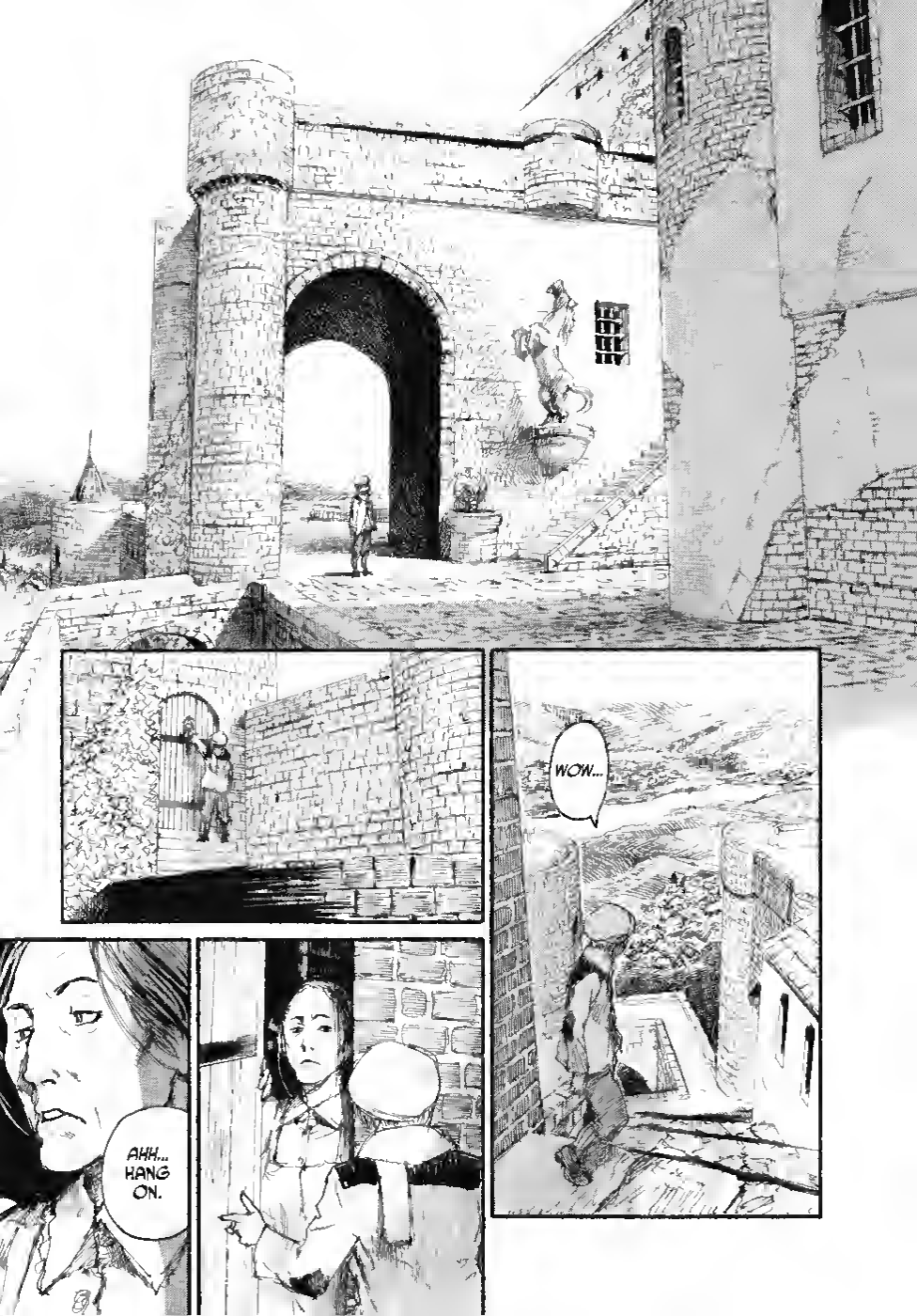

There was a letter from Philippa telling me of her debut performance, and enough money for one ticket.

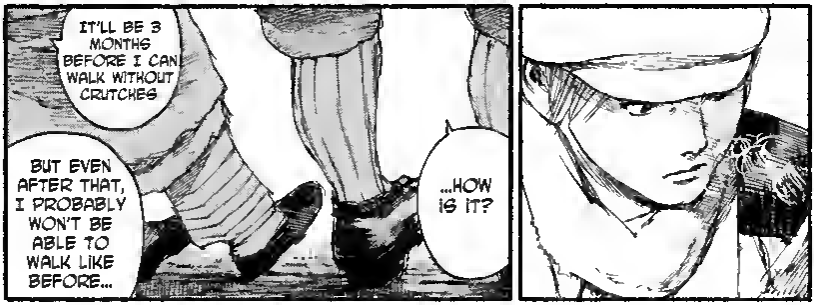

The opera was even more amazing that I'd ever imagined
But that day

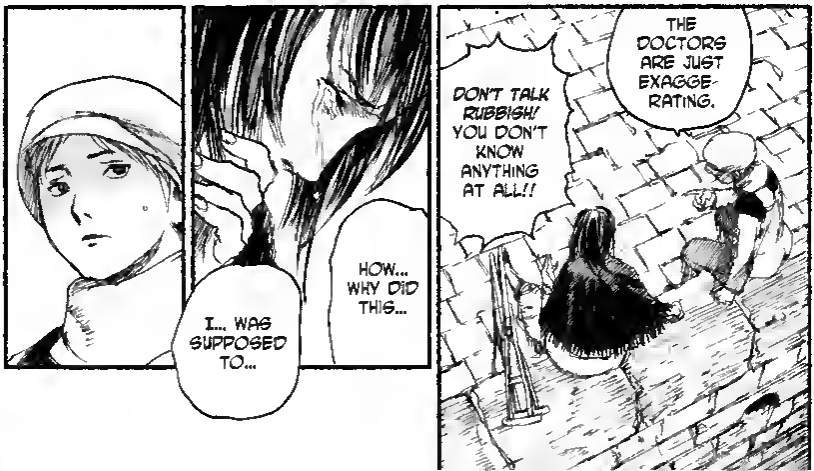
Although I focused all my attention on the various characters on stage,
For some reason I couldn't find Philippa.

...? DIDN'T SHE SAY SHE WAS PERFORMING TONIGHT?

UM... WASN'T PHILIPPA SUPPOSED TO BE PERFORMING ...?
AH...! WELL, YES BUT...
JONAS!? YOU CAME TO SEE US TONIGHT!
CATHERINE!
THERE'S NO CHANCE THAT SHE CAN RECOVER IN TIME TO PERFORM IN THIS OPERA BUT AS FOR AFTER THAT... I REALLY CAN'T SAY.
AND CRUSHED PHILIPPA'S LEG... I HAD TO TAKE HER ROLE TONIGHT.
IT WAS TERRIBLE... A LIGHTING TRUSS FELL DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF REHEARSALS YESTERDAY...
No, you can't see her tonight. But you should come by to visit her soon.
She's at the castle — I think Father's team of doctors are looking after her.

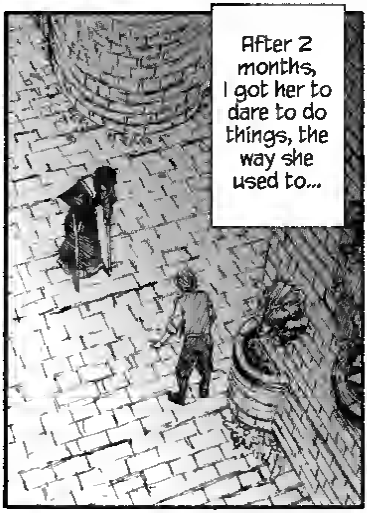

WOW...
AHH... HANG ON.


IT'LL BE 3 MONTHS BEFORE I CAN WALK WITHOUT CRUTCHES
BUT EVEN AFTER THAT, I PROBABLY WON'T BE ABLE TO WALK LIKE BEFORE...
...HOW IS IT?


I... WAS SUPPOSED TO...
HOW... WHY DID THIS...
DON'T TALK RUBBISH! YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL!!
THE DOCTORS ARE JUST EXAGGERATING.

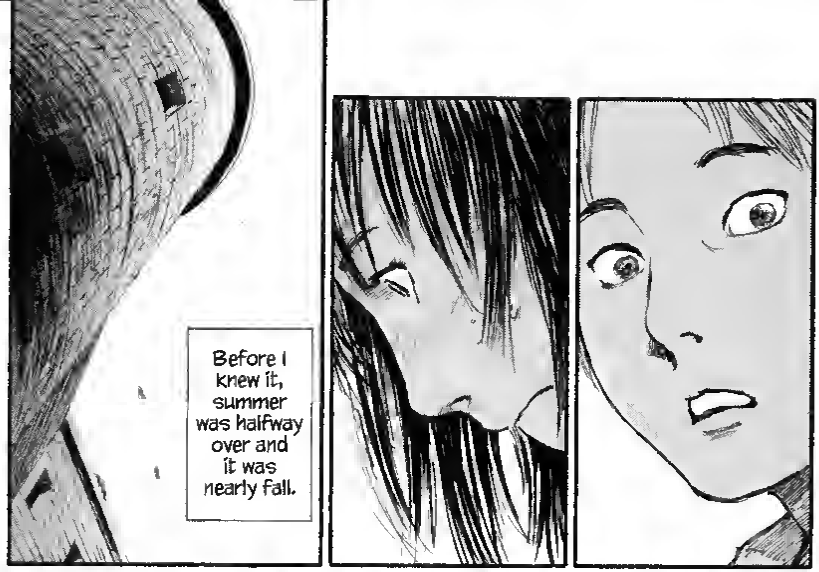
I ignored her words and came back every Sunday.
I'LL COME AGAIN.
I TOLD YOU, JUST COME BACK AFTER I'VE HEALED

At first, I had to berate her into taking even one step —


After 2 months, I got her to dare to do things, the way she used to...

It took her until the end of spring to start showing signs of life, just like the leaves budding in the trees.

I'll tell you now that I was truly happy then.
It reminded me of those afternoons by the lake shore in my hometown —
It felt like that strange turn of events had brought me back to the past.
YEAH, I GUESS ...
IF YOU CAN WALK WITH THIS, ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS HIDE THE SCAR UNDER YOUR DRESS WHEN YOU GO ON STAGE.
IT'S HARD LIVING HERE... I WAS ADOPTED INTO THIS FAMILY TO PERFORM ON THE STAGE.
HUH!? WHY?
I THINK... I'M GOING TO LEAVE THIS CASTLE.
THERE'S NO CHANCE I CAN BE AN OPERA SINGER WITH THIS LEG...
BUT MAYBE I CAN BE OF USE TO THE FAMILY IF I MARRY A MERCHANT OR SOMETHING.
YEAH... BUT IT'S OKAY.. LISTEN.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, PHIL.
BUT... I CAN'T EVEN WALK PROPERLY ANYMORE ...


Before I knew it, summer was halfway over and it was nearly fall.

A fall I'll never forget
—

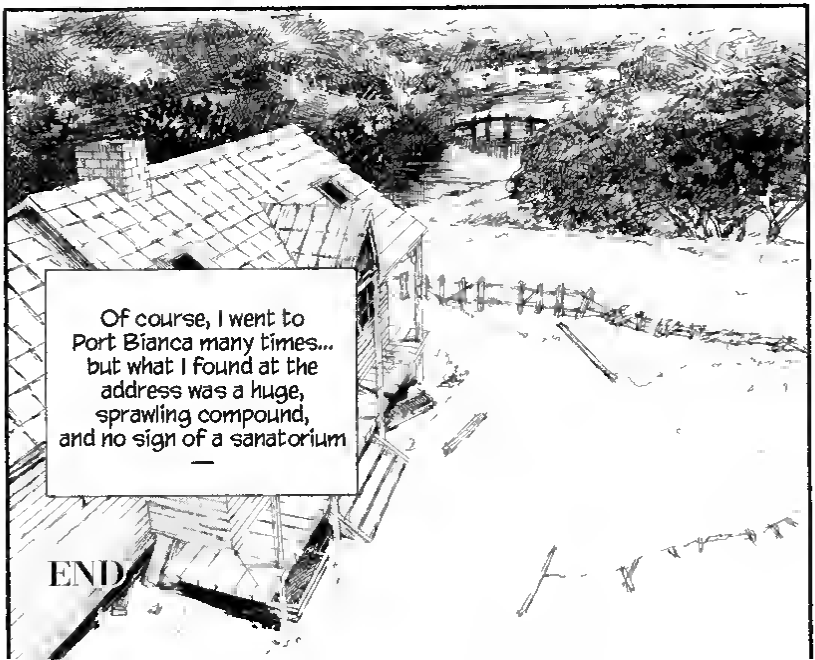
AHH!

WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP FOR A BIT?
UMM..
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY...?
JO! YOU SEE..
AH...! JONAS!
HE'S MANAGED TO FIND A WONDERFUL DOCTOR FOR ME!
YEAH...! FATHER REALLY IS AMAZING!
THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIX MY LEG!
I DON'T KNOW YET. MY MAID JANET SAID IT MIGHT BE LESS THAN A YEAR...
...SO WHEN WILL YOU BE BACK?
W-WOW... THAT'S GREAT.
I'M GOING THERE TODAY TO GET BETTER!
THERE'S A SANA-TORIUM IN PORT BIANCA!

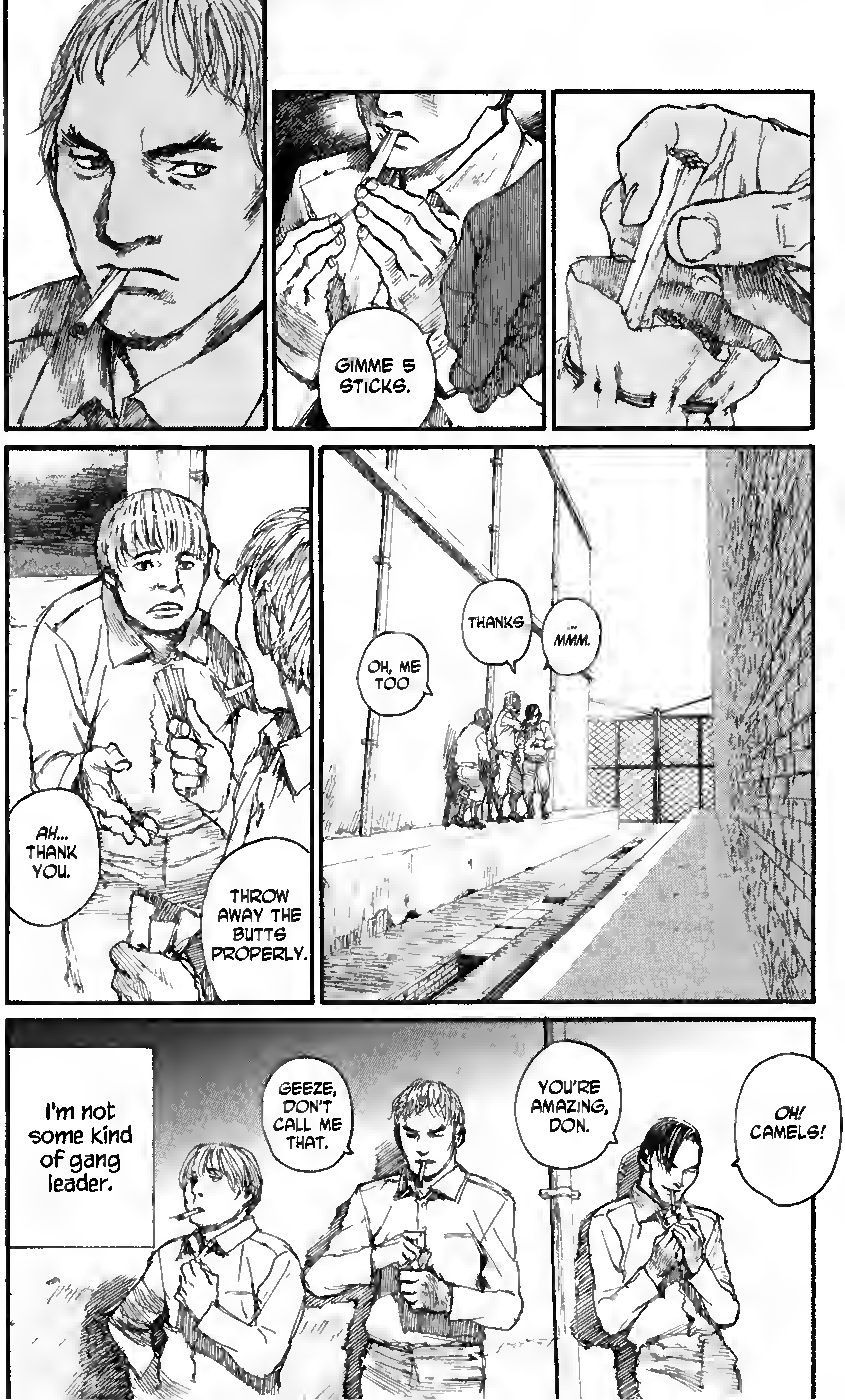
WE HAVE TO GO, MISS.
AH, OKAY!
HEY, COME SEE ME EVERY MONTH, OKAY?
AH, SURE.
ALL RIGHT, HERE'S THE ADDRESS! COME VISIT ME!
22 AGE
AHH... I HOPE THERE ARE GIRLS AROUND MY AGE THERE.
BUT I'LL BE BORED TO DEATH THERE.
I'LL PERFORM FOR YOU THIS TIME!
I'LL DEFINITELY GET BETTER AND GET ON THAT STAGE!
But that
FOR SURE!

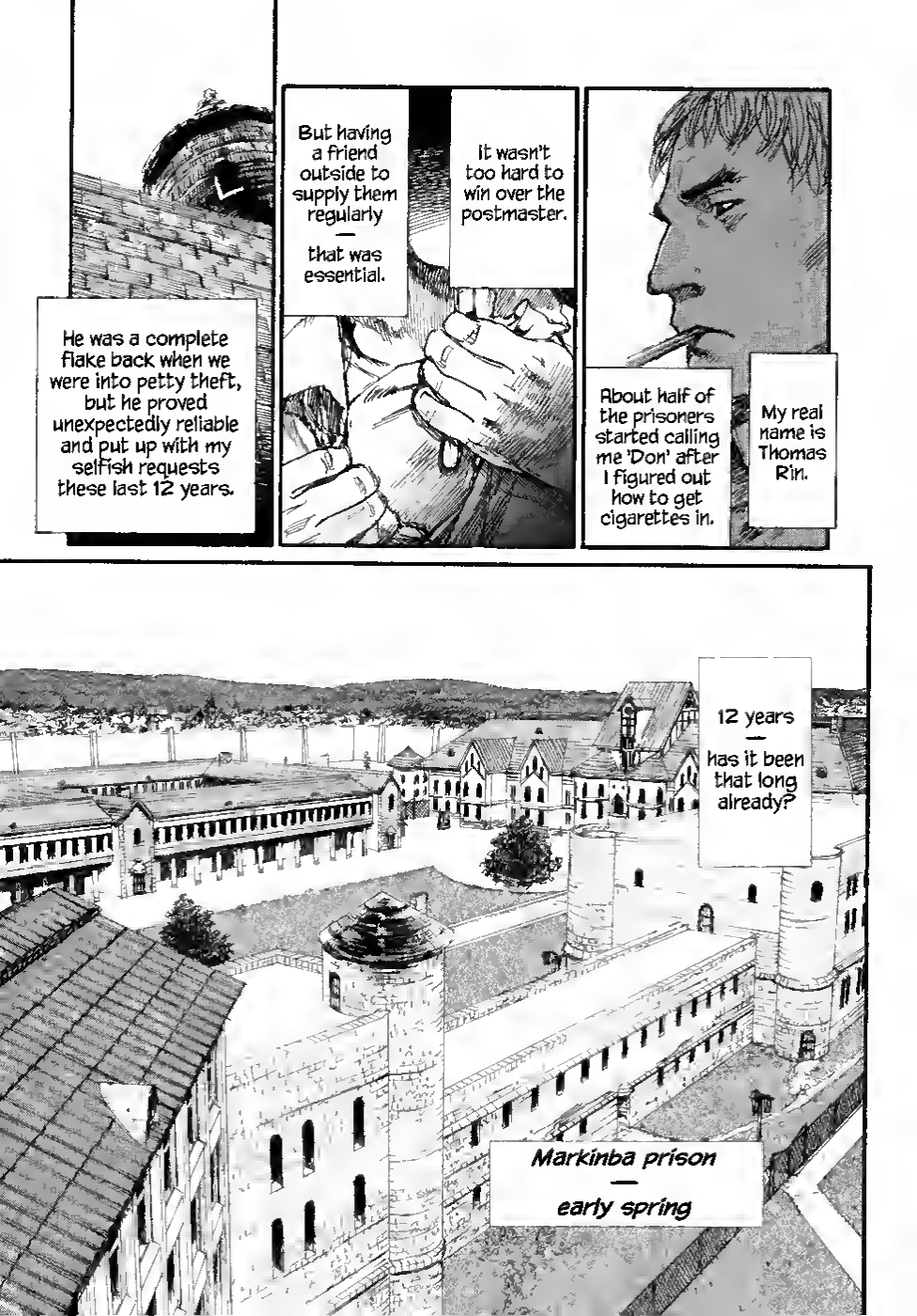
Was the last time I saw Philippa.

Both of those places are gone now.
I waited a year, two years... but she never came back to the Bradherley castle, nor the "Near the Road" orphanage.

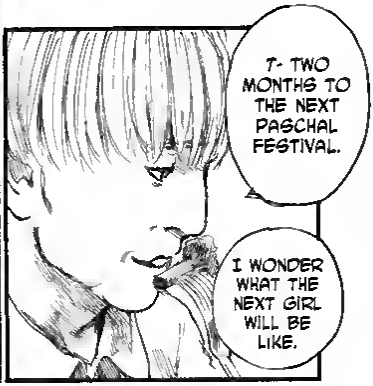

Of course, I went to Port Bianca many times... but what I found at the address was a huge, sprawling compound, and no sign of a sanatorium —
END

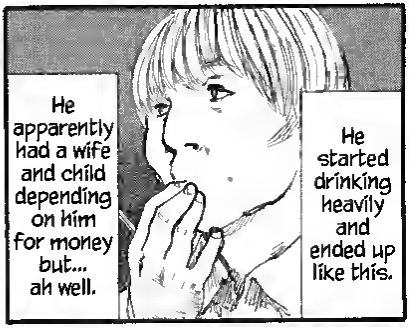
Chapter 4
家族写真
A FAMILY SHOT

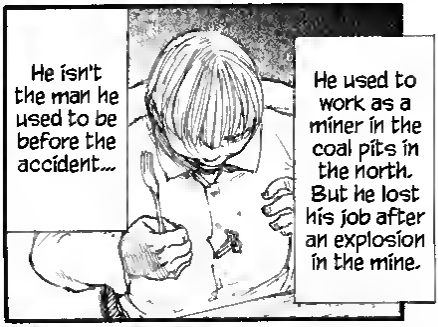

GIMME 5 STICKS.
AH... THANK YOU.
THROW AWAY THE BUTTS PROPERLY.
OH, ME TOO
THANKS
MMM.
I'm not some kind of gang leader.
GEEZE, DON'T CALL ME THAT.
YOU'RE AMAZING, DON.
OH! CAMELS!


My real name is Thomas Rin.
About half of the prisoners started calling me 'Don' after I figured out how to get cigarettes in.
It wasn't too hard to win over the postmaster.
But having a friend outside to supply them regularly — that was essential.
He was a complete flake back when we were into petty theft, but he proved unexpectedly reliable and put up with my selfish requests these last 12 years.
12 years — has it been that long already?
Markinba prison — early spring

So what do you think she'll be like?
Geeze... is that all you live for?
This man is Pierce Dawson.


T- two months to the next Paschal festival.
I wonder what the next girl will be like.


He apparently had a wife and child depending on him for money but... ah well.
He started drinking heavily and ended up like this.

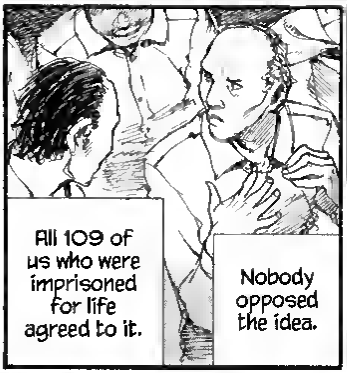

He isn't the man he used to be before the accident...
He used to work as a miner in the coal pits in the north. But he lost his job after an explosion in the mine.

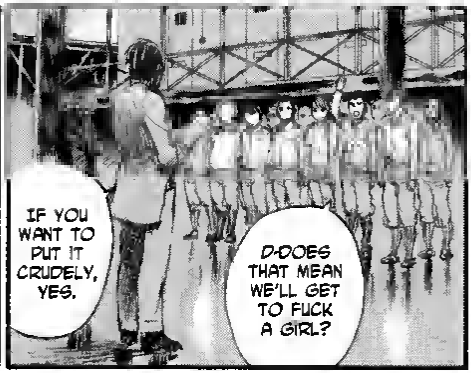
This abominable "festival" started 7 years ago —

That's easy for you to say, Don. P-people ask you to go first...
Don't debase yourself by talking like that.

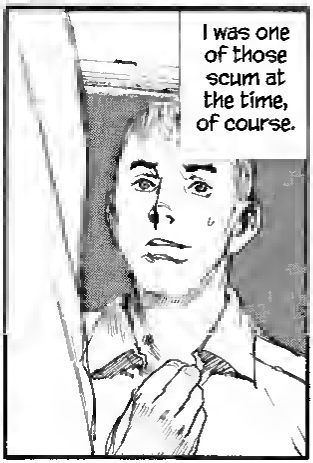
I- I only got to do it once last year. I'll try harder this time.
W-why am I always o-one of the last?

ANY QUESTIONS ?


All 109 of us who were imprisoned for life agreed to it.
Nobody opposed the idea.


IF YOU WANT TO PUT IT CRUDELY, YES.
D-DOES THAT MEAN WE'LL GET TO FUCK A GIRL?

But...


I was one of those scum at the time, of course.

How can you do it with someone staring at you like that!?
"What...? What in the world are we doing?"
I saw myself reflected in her eyes... like they were mirrors...
Though, well... I've kinda grown numb to it now.
Her eyes burned themselves into my brain. I haven't missed going to Mass since then.

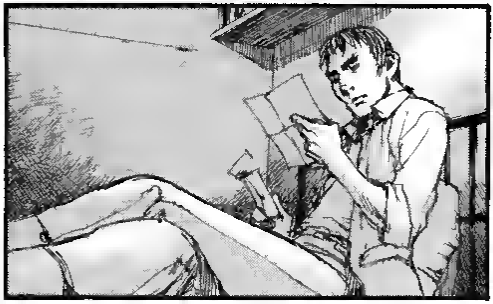
WELL, YEAH
HOW NOBLE.
ONLY YOU WOULD THINK OF SOMETHING LIKE THAT, DON
SO YOU WON'T BE TAKING PART AGAIN THIS YEAR, CLIFF?
WE'RE ALL SCUM...
BOTH THE PRISON AND THE PRISONERS ...
SCARED ?
I'M SCARED
NAH, IT'S NOT BECAUSE I PITY THE GIRLS OR ANYTHING.
Rumor had it ...
BACK TO WORK!
...WELL, I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT SOME OTHER TIME.

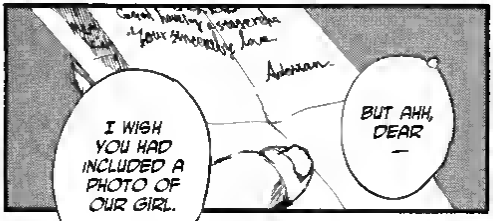
That only the lifers were allowed to participate in the Paschal festival
—
GEEZE WHEN THE TIME COMES AROUND, ALL OF THEM...
THERE'S REALLY NO BETTER WAY TO MAKE THEM BEHAVE...
BUT IT'S STRANGE THAT THE PRISONERS HERE FOR 5 OR EVEN 10 YEARS DON'T EITHER.
THOSE HERE FOR A YEAR OR TWO DON'T GET TO JOIN IN.
SHH! SHH!
This man is Cliff Gardner. He came here 2 years ago and used to be a journalist.
I KNOW! IT LOOKS JUST LIKE THE COACH THAT THE BRADHERLEY OPERA TROUPE USES!
NO, WAIT. I'M SURE I'VE SEEN IT SOMEWHERE BEFORE. WHERE WAS IT...
OVER THERE. THAT'S THE COACH THEY USE TO BRING IN THE "LAMBS".
UHH.., I DON'T REALLY KNOW..
HUH? DON'T YOU ALL REMEMBER ?

He was arrested after he broke into the house of a member of the House of Commons while investigating a scandal.
The newspapers at the time reported that one of the servants was killed while Cliff was trying to escape.
He swore on his mother's grave that he didn't do it, but...
THESE ARE DARK DAYS FOR THE NOBILITY.
He shouldn't be in a place like this, and wouldn't if he'd been a little more cautious.
WHILE TAXES FOR LANDOWNERS HAVE GONE UP 4 TIMES IN THE LAST 10 YEARS.
THE HOUSE OF LORDS IS SLOWLY HAVING ITS POWER WHITTLED AWAY...
I WONDER IF THE "PASCHAL FESTIVAL" IS RELATED TO ALL OF THIS.
THE PERSON WHO PROPOSED SATING THE SEXUAL AND VIOLENT URGES OF LIFERS IS PROBABLY NONE OTHER THAN LORD NICOLA BRADHERLEY.
...WELL, BUT NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S A PLAN BORDERING ON THE CRIMINAL.
THE NOBILITY MIGHT HAVE COME CLOSE TO IMPLEMENTING IT ONCE OR TWICE, BUT ANY NUMBER OF THEM MUST HAVE DEMURRED ...
THEN THERE WAS THE HENGLEY UPRISING 9 YEARS AGO.
IT CAUSED THEM ALL TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS

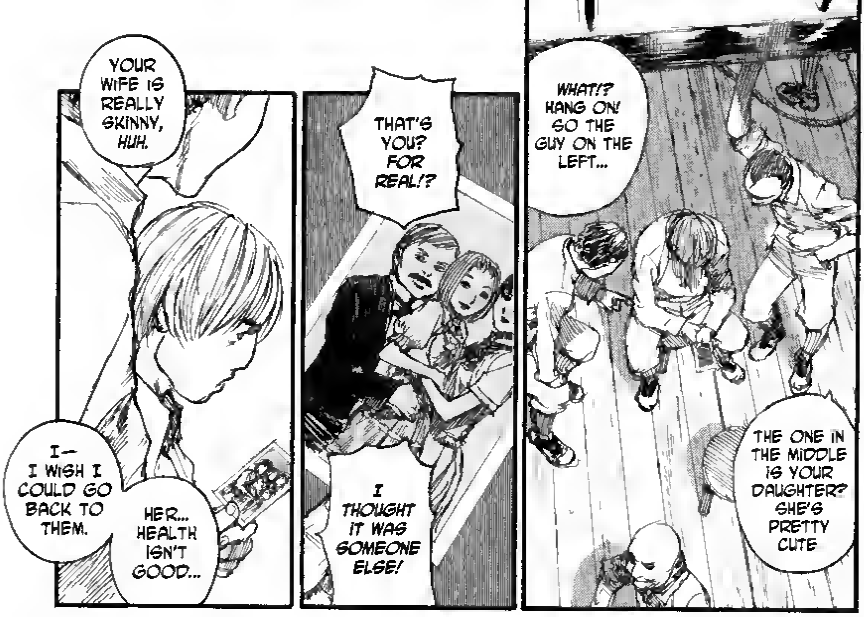
A huge revolt at the end of the 19th century. Between the prisoners and guards, there were 37 dead and 145 injured —
"The Heneley Uprising"

Instead of punishing the ringleaders for any violence or organized gaolbreak, the penalty was instead inflicted on the girls through the "festival".
The "festival" started with the laudable aim to prevent an incident like that from occurring again.

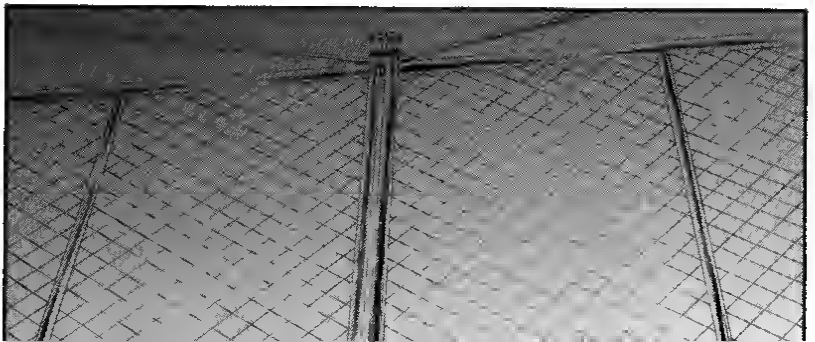



I WISH YOU HAD INCLUDED A PHOTO OF OUR GIRL.
BUT AHH, DEAR —

I WONDER WHAT IT MEANS THAT WE CALL THEM "LAMBS".
WHAT DO YOU THINK? IT KINDA EMBODIES
RELAX ALREADY. IT'S A REST DAY.

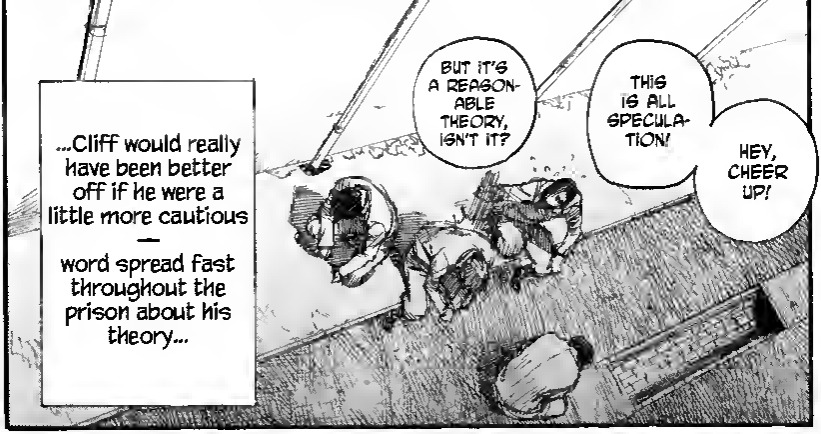

YOUR WIFE IS REALLY SKINNY, HUH.
I— I WISH I COULD GO BACK TO THEM.
HER... HEALTH ISN'T GOOD...
THAT'S YOU? FOR REAL!?
I THOUGHT IT WAS SOMEONE ELSE!
WHAT!? HANG ON! SO THE GUY ON THE LEFT...
THE ONE IN THE MIDDLE IS YOUR DAUGHTER? SHE'S PRETTY CUTE

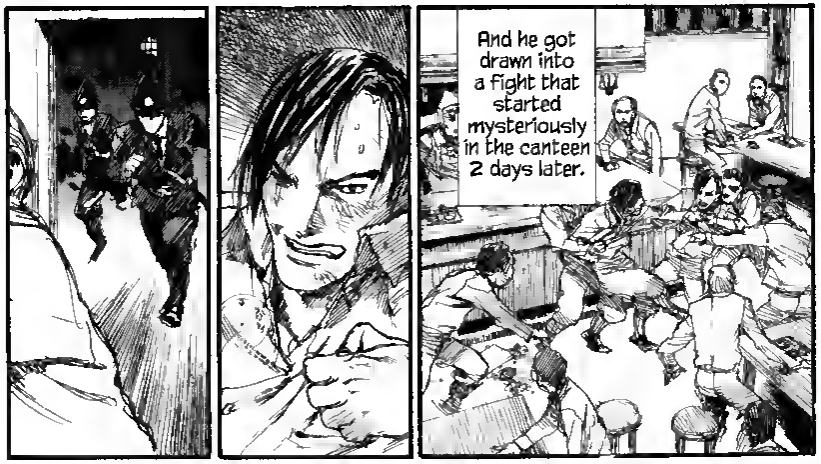
That's how we'd spend our afternoons on a rest day —
Apologizing to their loved ones while thinking of the next girl.
The ones without families think of their woman.
The ones with families think of their families.



THE PLAN MUST HAVE BEEN RAISED IN PARLIAMENT.
THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY'S REAL INTENTION IS TO MAKE BOTH THEMSELVES AND THE GOVERNMENT EQUALLY CULPABLE.
THAT WOULD HAVE AMELIORATED ANY OPPOSITION TO THE PLAN.
THEY MUST HAVE PROMISED TO TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY... TO SELL THE PLAN
BUT OF COURSE, THERE ARE RETURNS TOO.
THE MASTERMIND WOULD BE TAKING SIGNIFICANT RISKS... IF IT BECOMES PUBLIC, HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET AWAY SIMPLY BY STEPPING DOWN.
YEAH, THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WOULD BE WHO WOULD BE LIABLE FOR IT.
ONLY THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY HAD BOTH THE POWER AND THE RESOURCES.
IF YOU CONSIDER WHO COULD EXECUTE THIS PLAN,
AND THE OPERA TROUPE USED TO SUPPLY THE GIRLS MIGHT EVEN BE EXEMPT FROM TAXES OR SOMETHING.
THE HOUSE OF LORDS COULD REGAIN ITS LOST CLOUT

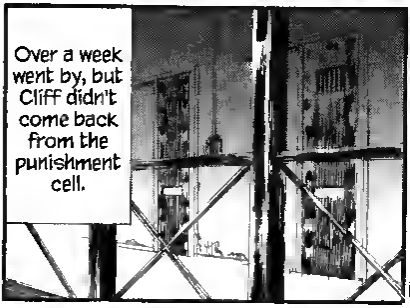
THEY PROBABLY USED ORPHANAGES TO SUPPLY THE GIRLS.. BECAUSE NO ONE WOULD MISS THEM WHEN THEY DIED.
THOUGH THE REDUCED RISK OF VENEREAL DISEASES WOULD ALSO BE A PLUS.
AND THE MEN AS WELL.
MEANING THAT ANYONE WHO'S HAD SEX WITH ONE OF THE GIRLS
THEY CHOSE THE LIFERS.
WON'T SEE THE OUTSIDE OF A PRISON EVER AGAIN.
THEY WON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF PAROLE... THEY'LL DIE IN HERE!
...
...
...
THAT'S WHY I...
THAT'S WHY THEY'RE TAKING NO CHANCES THAT IT'LL BE MADE PUBLIC.
THE COUNTRY, PRISONERS AND GIRLS ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER


...Cliff would really have been better off if he were a little more cautious —
word spread fast throughout the prison about his theory...
BUT IT'S A REASONABLE THEORY, ISN'T IT?
THIS IS ALL SPECULATION!
HEY, CHEER UP!


And he got drawn into a fight that started mysteriously in the canteen 2 days later.

...WHAT CAUSED IT?
SHUT UP AND COME WITH US!
WAIT! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
OW OW OW...

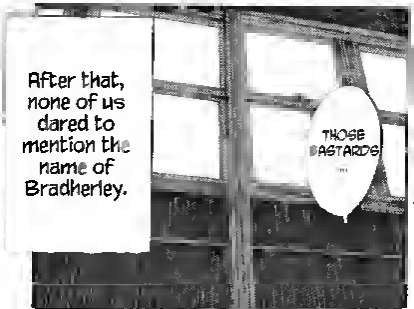
Y'KNOW, I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT OTHER GUY AROUND HERE BEFORE
IT STARTED WITH AN ARGUMENT OVER WHETHER HE CUT THE QUEUE OR NOT.
I DON'T KNOW. I WAS WATCHING IT ALL, BUT I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT.


Over a week went by, but Cliff didn't come back from the punishment cell.

I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS..
...
...
...

DO YOU THINK HE'S VANISHED?
PROBABLY ...

After a month — all the prisoners had forgotten about the fight,
Except those of us who had heard his theory first hand.


After that, none of us dared to mention the name of Bradherley.
THOSE BASTARDS ...

Why not?
WANTING TO RETURN TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD AFTER GOING THROUGH ALL THIS
IS REALLY TOO MUCH TO ASK FOR.
BUT WHO CAN SUCCESSFULLY RESIST HIS LUST YEAR AFTER YEAR FOR DECADES?
SO WHY NOT? JUST TRY AND FORGET ALL THOSE THINGS FOR TODAY...
A THINKING MAN CAN'T ENJOY A FESTIVAL LIKE THIS.
THAT'S RIGHT. JUST BE LIKE PIERCE..

WHAT'S WRONG ?
I'M NOT SURE!
ONE OF THE PRISONERS HAS GONE MAD...
!!
AHHHHHH!!
AHHHHH!
AHHHHH!

...FATHER?
AHHHHHHHHHHH!!
AHHHHHHHHHHH!!
HEY! NO ONE ALLOWED YOU TO GO AHEAD YET!
GET AWAY FROM HER! HEY!
...NO WAY.

WHA-!
SLIDE
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, FATTY —
OOF!
THUMP
YEAH!!
おおお
HOLD IT!

HEY! HURRY UP AND LOCK IT!
CLINK CLINK CLINK
AHH!
CRUSH
THAT'S A COAL MINER FOR YOU!
SHIT!
This festival is disgusting.

STOP! STOP OR I'LL-
THUD
ARGG!

HEY! GET BACK INTO THE ROOM! BACK!
W-WHAT ARE YOU ALL-!?

THAT'S AS FAR AS YOU GO, SCUM!!
STOP MOVING OR WE SHOOT!!
RUN! RUN! HAHAHA!
THWACK
UGH!
YOU BASTARD ...

...!
AHH...
...THOMAS
RIN.

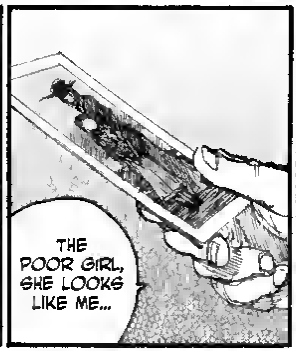
A WEEK IN THE PUNISHMENT CELL MUST HAVE BEEN ROUGH WITH YOUR INJURIES.
YEAH, IT WASN'T EASY.
ARE YOU ASLEEP, THOMAS RIN?
AHH... NO...
I DID SOMETHING STUPID.
AS YOU WISH...
BUT I'LL HAVE TO CHANGE MY IMPRESSION OF YOU OVER THIS INCIDENT.
YOU'VE BEEN A MODEL PRISONER SO FAR AND I'VE CLOSED ONE EYE OVER YOUR LITTLE BUSINESS.
...WELL, WE NEARLY HAD A REVOLT.
...THAT'S MY HOPE, AT LEAST.
NONETHELESS, THOROUGH BACKGROUND CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE MANDATORY BEFORE SUPPLYING GIRLS NEXT YEAR.
WELL, IT CAN'T BE DENIED THAT ONE REASON THE WHOLE INCIDENT BEGAN WAS THAT WE WEREN'T CAREFUL ENOUGH.. BUT WHAT A RARE OCCURRENCE.

PIERCE AND ELIZABETH DAWSON?
THEY WERE BURIED 4 DAYS AGO IN THE SOUTHEAST CEMETERY.
...AHH, IF YOU DON'T MIND,
I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU DID WITH THEIR BODIES..
...WHAT?
OF COURSE.
IN THE SAME GRAVE ?
MAIL!
I GUESS YOU LOT DO HAVE A SHRED OF HUMANITY, AFTER ALL.
IT'S NOTHING... HAHAHA...

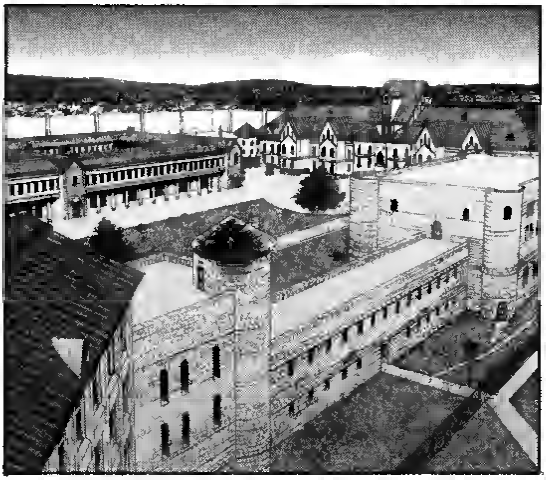
A PHOTO OF OUR DAUGHTER ...

AHH!

...
...
...


THE POOR GIRL, SHE LOOKS LIKE ME...

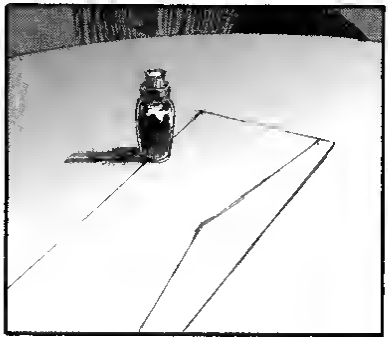
...HEH HEH...
HAHAHA... LOOK AT THAT.

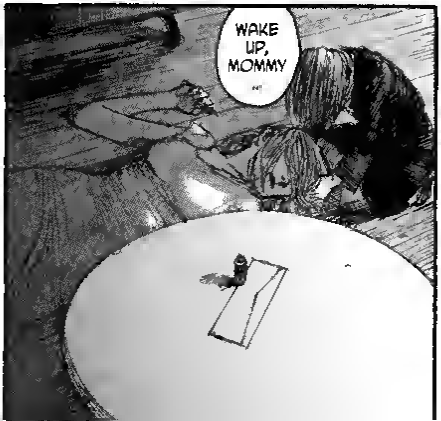


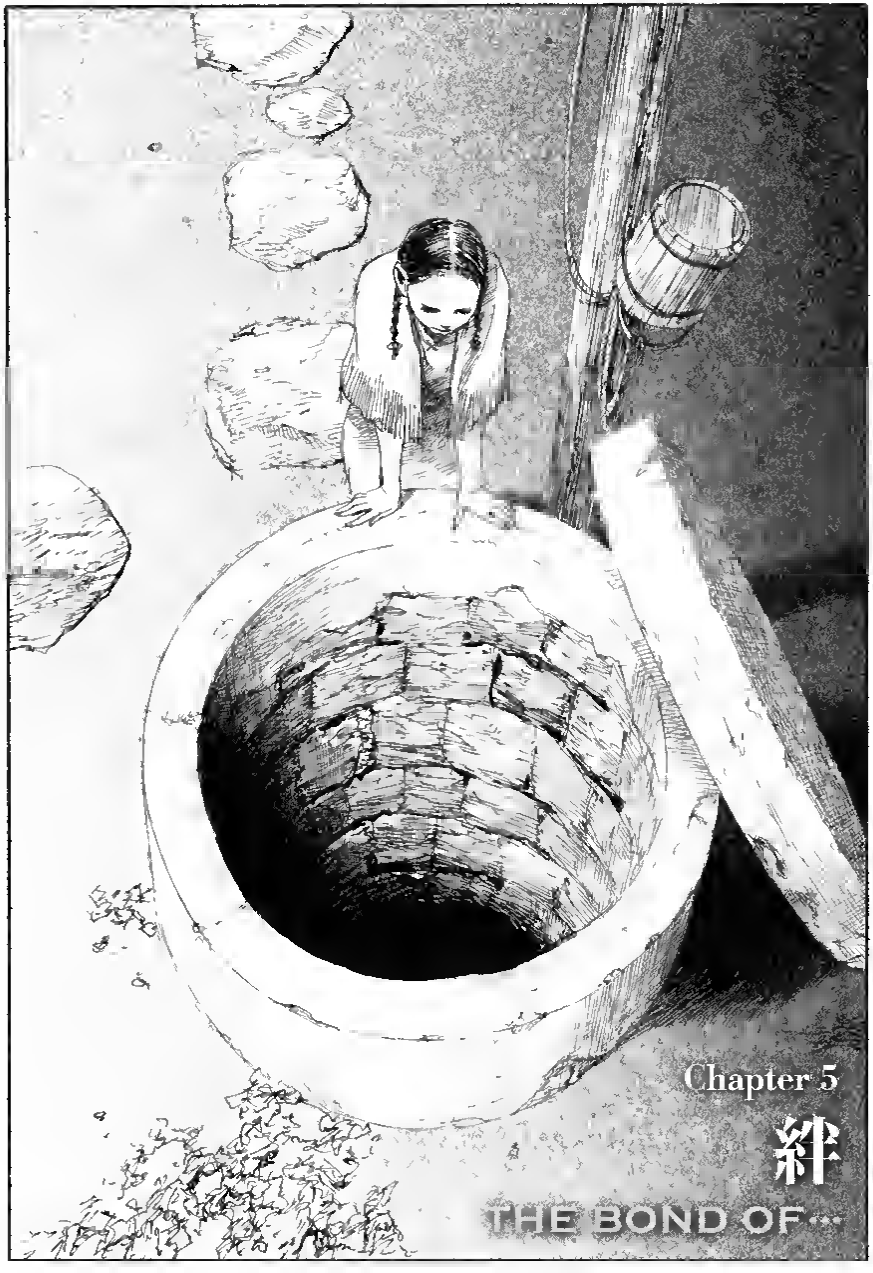
END

MOMMY... WAKE UP...

MOMMY ...




WAKE UP, MOMMY


Chapter 5
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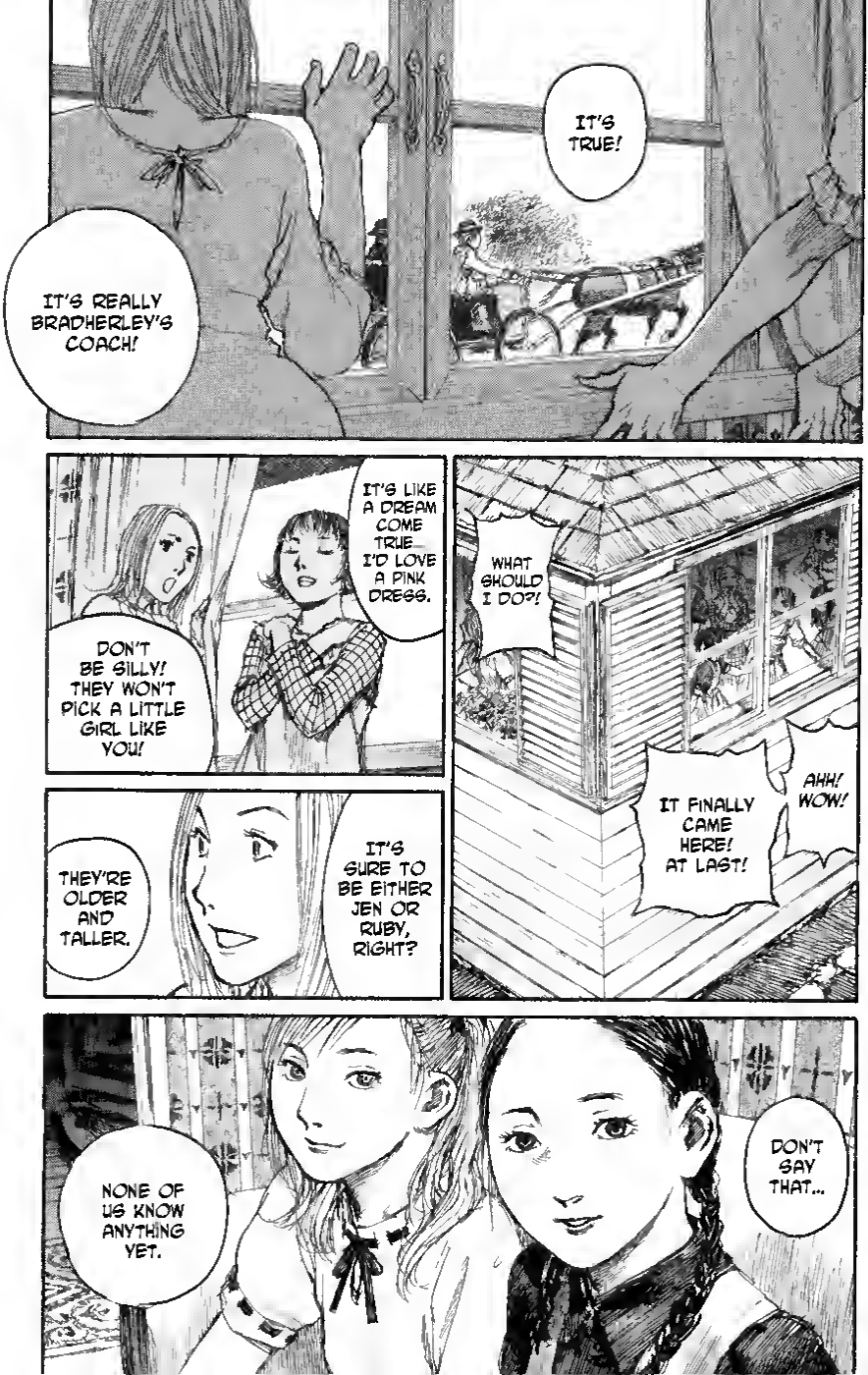
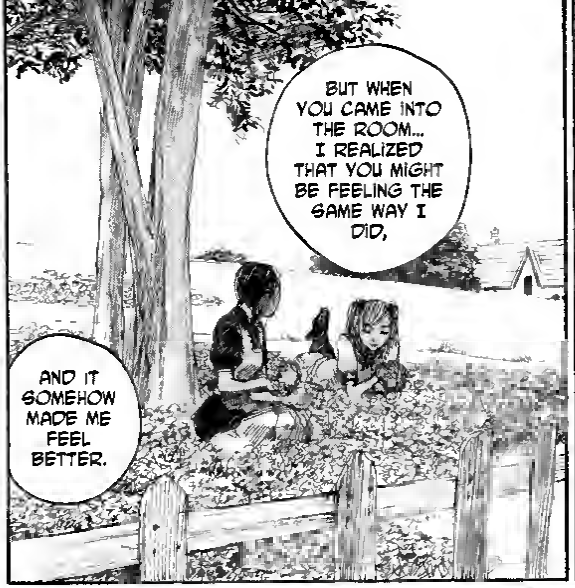
THE BOND OF…


IT'S TRUE!
IT'S REALLY BRADHERLEY'S COACH!
IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE... I'D LOVE A PINK DRESS.
DON'T BE SILLY! THEY WON'T PICK A LITTLE GIRL LIKE YOU!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?!
AHH! WOW!
IT FINALLY CAME HERE! AT LAST!
IT'S SURE TO BE EITHER JEN OR RUBY, RIGHT?
THEY'RE OLDER AND TALLER.
DON'T SAY THAT...
NONE OF US KNOW ANYTHING YET.

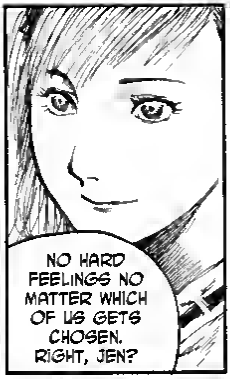
MY MY, HEADMASTER! YOU DIDN'T SEE OUR VISITOR OFF?
...SO WHO WAS CHOSEN?
UH... YEAH.
WELL, OF COURSE!
MY MY!
THEY'LL TELL US OFFICIALLY WHEN THEY SEND THE DRESS IN 2 WEEKS.
EITHER JEN OR RUBY..
BUT IT FEELS LIKE IT WAS JUST YESTERDAY THAT THOSE TWO GIRLS CAME TO INGLESIDE —
IT'S BEEN SO MANY YEARS NOW...

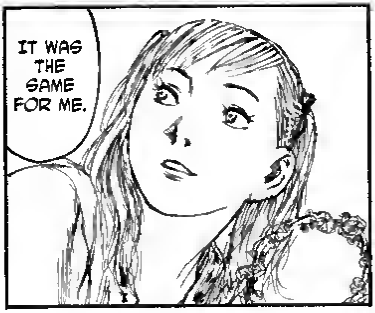
RUBY SPENCER. IT'S SPELLED...
...SO FROM TODAY ...
...SHE'S GOT THE SAME HAT AS ME.
YOU'VE GOT THE SAME HAT AS ME.


BUT WHEN YOU CAME INTO THE ROOM... I REALIZED THAT YOU MIGHT BE FEELING THE SAME WAY I DID,
AND IT SOMEHOW MADE ME FEEL BETTER.

I WAS SO UPSET AT THE TIME THAT ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS CRY AND RUN AWAY.

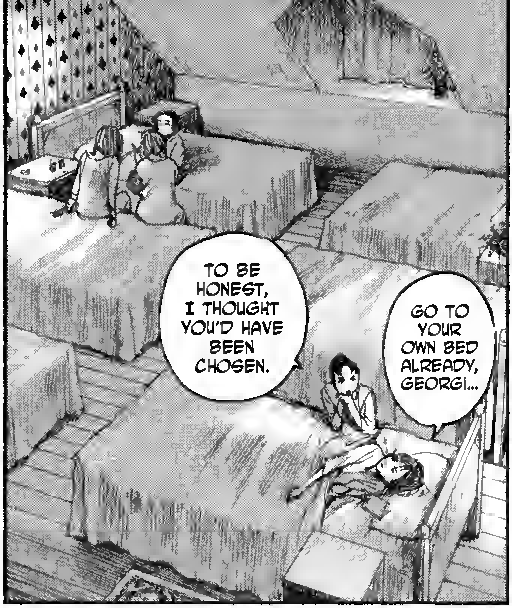
..YEAH.


NO HARD FEELINGS NO MATTER WHICH OF US GETS CHOSEN. RIGHT, JEN?

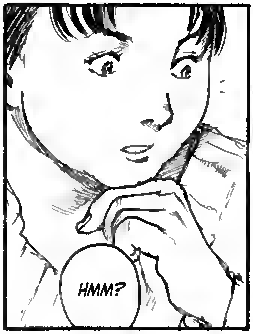

IT WAS THE SAME FOR ME.

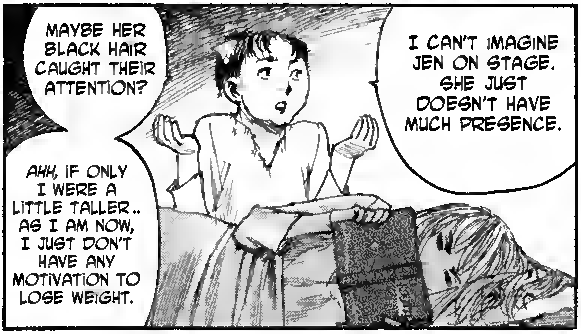
THOSE TWO GIRLS ARE REALLY CLOSE, HUH?
YOU MEAN JEN AND RUBY?
THEY CAME HERE ON THE SAME DAY, I HEAR.
OH, THEY'RE SISTERS?
NO, IT WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE AND THEY'RE AROUND THE SAME AGE TOO..
THEY GET ALONG FABULOUSLY.
BUT THEIR STORIES WERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
JEN'S MOTHER FELL SICK AND DIED WHILE JEN WAS VERY YOUNG,
AND HER FATHER DIED IN A COACH ACCIDENT.
WELL, ALMOST ALL OF US HERE HAVE SIMILAR STORIES... BUT AS FOR RUBY,
SHE NEVER KNEW WHO HER FATHER WAS,
AND HER MOTHER KILLED HERSELF.

CON-GRATS, JEN!
CON-GRATS!
AHH! I'M SO JEALOUS!
STOP STARING AT IT AND PUT IT ON ALREADY!
WOW! IT'S MADE OF ORGANDIE!
IT'S BEAUTI-FUL!
HEY RUBY! JUST LOOK AT THE SLEEVES!
WHAT'S WITH THAT FACE?
CONGRATS, JEN, I'M REALLY HAPPY FOR YOU...
... THANK YOU.


TO BE HONEST, I THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE BEEN CHOSEN.
GO TO YOUR OWN BED ALREADY, GEORGI...

— SO TELL ME, RUBY...
ARE YOU SURE YOU AREN'T HIDING ANYTHING?


HMM?

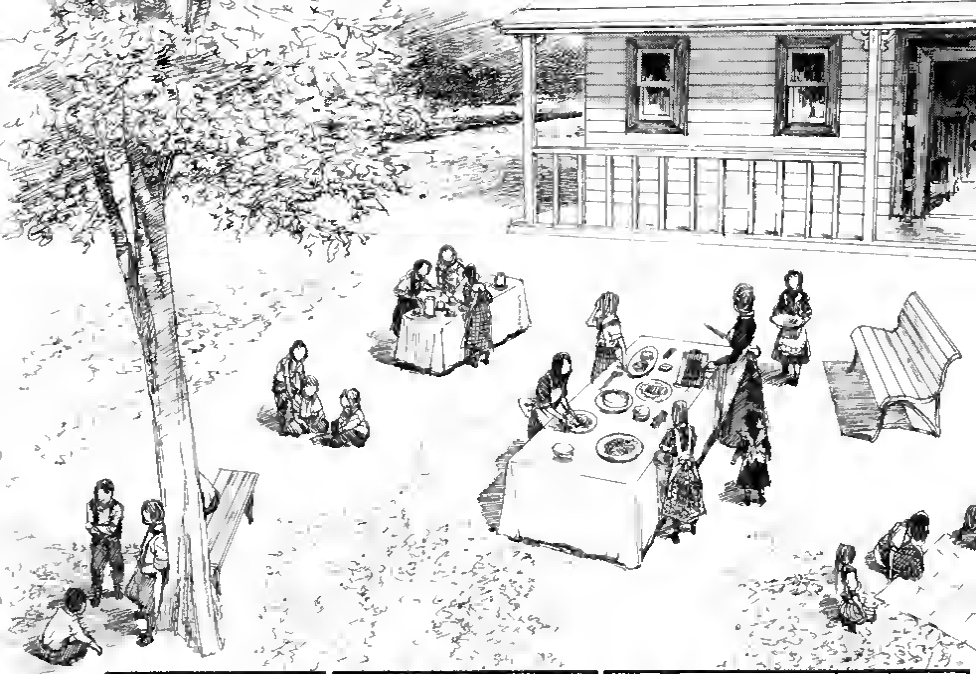

MAYBE HER BLACK HAIR CAUGHT THEIR ATTENTION?
AHH, IF ONLY I WERE A LITTLE TALLER.. AS I AM NOW, I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY MOTIVATION TO LOSE WEIGHT.
I CAN'T IMAGINE JEN ON STAGE. SHE JUST DOESN'T HAVE MUCH PRESENCE.

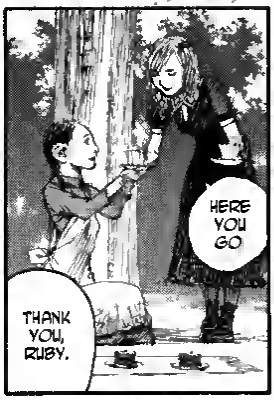
D-DON'T BE SILLY. IT'S FROM A RELATIVE ...
A LETTER? WHO IS IT FROM? DON'T TELL ME IT'S A BOY!?

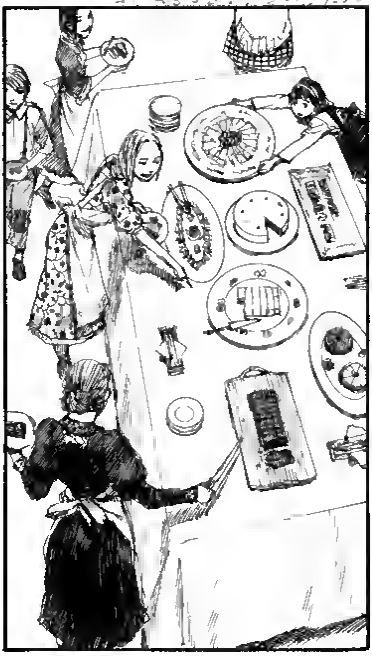
WHAT'S THAT?
HUH?

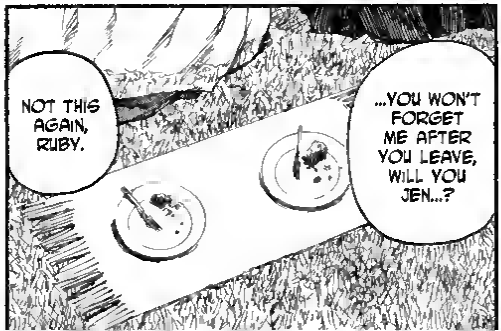
THUD
HEY... UGH... STOP IT... GET OFF ME!
I'M SURE IT'S A BOY! LET ME SEE!
BUT YOU SAID YOU DON'T HAVE ANY RELATIVES!
WELL, I KNOW YOU MUST BE NERVOUS...

SAY... LET'S HAVE A FAREWELL-CUM-TEA PARTY IN TWO DAYS.
JEN WILL BE SAD IF YOU TWO DON'T MAKE UP. SHE'S ONLY HERE FOR ANOTHER WEEK.
YES MA'AM
GEORGI! YOU STARTED IT THIS TIME
BUT FIGHTING ON A HAPPY DAY LIKE THIS?
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING FOR JEN!
WE'RE BEST FRIENDS, AFTER ALL!
I'LL DO IT!!
HMM WELL... YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE THEM.
A TEA PARTY!? REALLY?
WILL THERE BE SESAME SWEETS AND LAYER CAKE!?
HO HO... BUT WHY DID YOU ASK?
OF COURSE, THAT WAS MY PLAN.
MA'AM! LET ME HELP TOO!



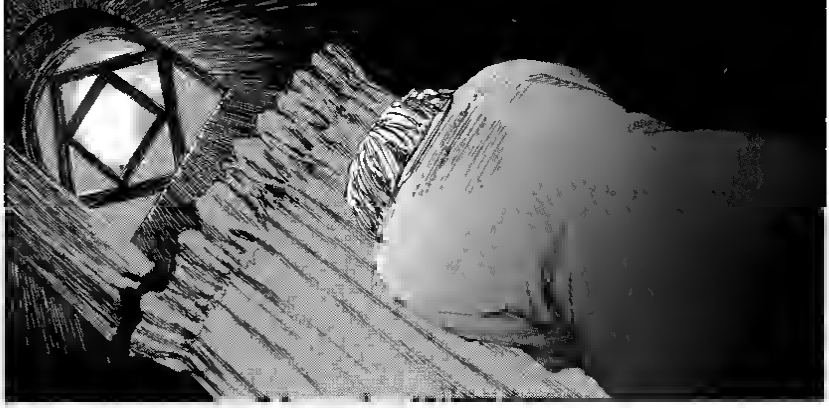

HERE YOU GO
THANK YOU, RUBY.




NOT THIS AGAIN, RUBY.
...YOU WON'T FORGET ME AFTER YOU LEAVE, WILL YOU JEN...?

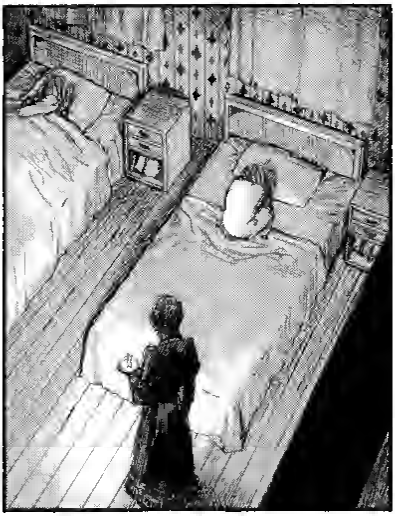
WHAT'S WRONG, GIRTY?
UGH...
I'LL SEE YOU AT THE BRAD-HERLEY CASTLE NEXT YEAR.
THERE'S NO WAY THAT A GIRL LIKE YOU WON'T BE CHOSEN.
DOCTOR!! OVER HERE!

BUT IT WAS REALLY A BIT TOO FAST TO BE FOOD POISONING.
SO HOW ARE THE CHILDREN, DOCTOR?
I'M SORRY, I'M SO SORRY.
I HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD TURN OUT LIKE THIS..
OH, IT'S NOT SERIOUS.
THEY'LL ALL BE FINE BY TONIGHT, THOUGH SOME CHILDREN MIGHT FEEL A BIT NAUSEOUS AT MEALTIMES IN FUTURE.
HOW-EVER ...
...?
LET'S SEE... THIS ONE.
JEN INGLIS.
ONE OF THE GIRLS IS QUITE ILL.
W-WHO IS IT?
WE'LL NEED TO KEEP HER FOR OBSERVATION FOR A FEW DAYS.



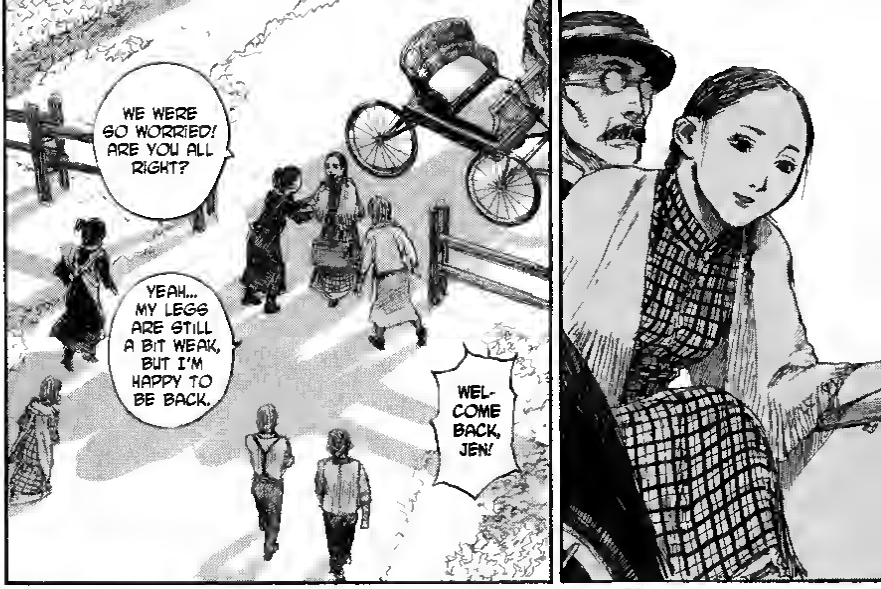
MS HESTER,
WILL JEN BE ABLE TO JOIN THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY...?

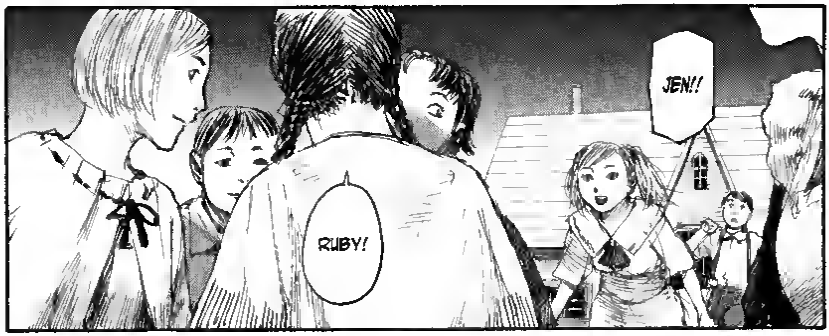
...YOU SHOULD BE SLEEPING, RUBY...



3 days later

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT, RUBY... I'VE TOLD THEM WHAT HAPPENED
THEY'LL WAIT UNTIL JEN IS DISCHARGED.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HER. GOOD NIGHT, RUBY.

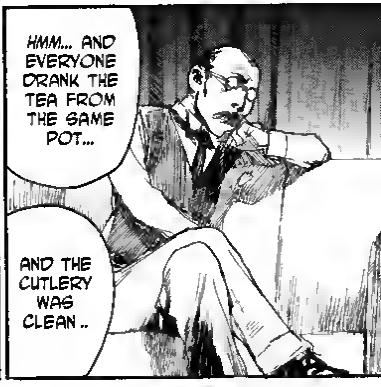

WE WERE SO WORRIED! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH... MY LEGS ARE STILL A BIT WEAK, BUT I'M HAPPY TO BE BACK.
WEL-COME BACK, JEN!

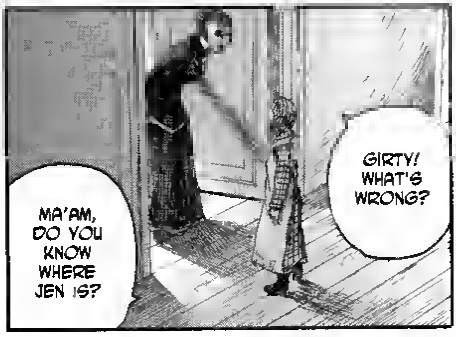

JEN!!
RUBY!

I NEED TO TALK TO YOU PRI-VATELY..

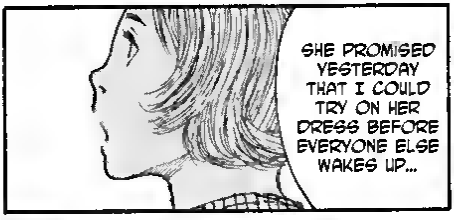
MS MILLER...

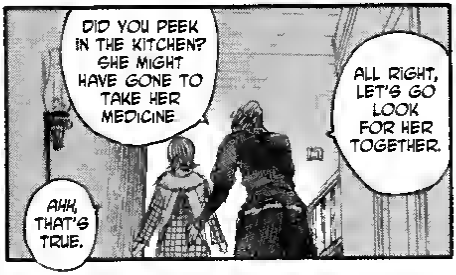
I'M ASHAMED... ARSENIC POISONING OFTEN PRESENTS SYMPTOMS SIMILAR TO FOOD POISONING, SO IT WAS A LITTLE TRICKY TO DETECT..
ARSENIC, TO BE PRECISE. WE FOUND TRACES OF IT IN THE CAKE.
A-ARSENIC ?
POISON!?
ONE MORE QUESTION.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY JEN INGLIS INGESTED MORE ARSENIC THAN ANYONE ELSE?
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE POISON?
NO... I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW SOMEONE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THEIR HANDS ON IT.
NEITHER THE HEADMASTER NOR I HAD ANY OF THE LAYER CAKE. IT WAS FOR THE CHILDREN.
BUT... NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT,
WELL...
EVERYONE ONLY HAD ONE SLICE OF CAKE
AND EVERYONE STARTED FEELING SICK AROUND THE SAME TIME... JEN DIDN'T EAT ANYTHING THAT THE OTHERS DIDN'T...


HMM... AND EVERYONE DRANK THE TEA FROM THE SAME POT...
AND THE CUTLERY WAS CLEAN..


GIRTY! WHAT'S WRONG?
MA'AM, DO YOU KNOW WHERE JEN IS?

MA'AM! MS HESTER!


SHE PROMISED YESTERDAY THAT I COULD TRY ON HER DRESS BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE WAKES UP...

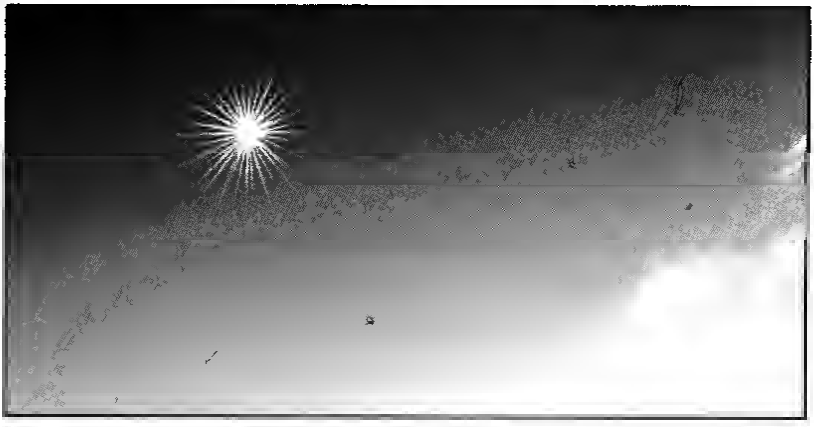

DID YOU PEEK IN THE KITCHEN? SHE MIGHT HAVE GONE TO TAKE HER MEDICINE
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO LOOK FOR HER TOGETHER.
AHH, THAT'S TRUE.

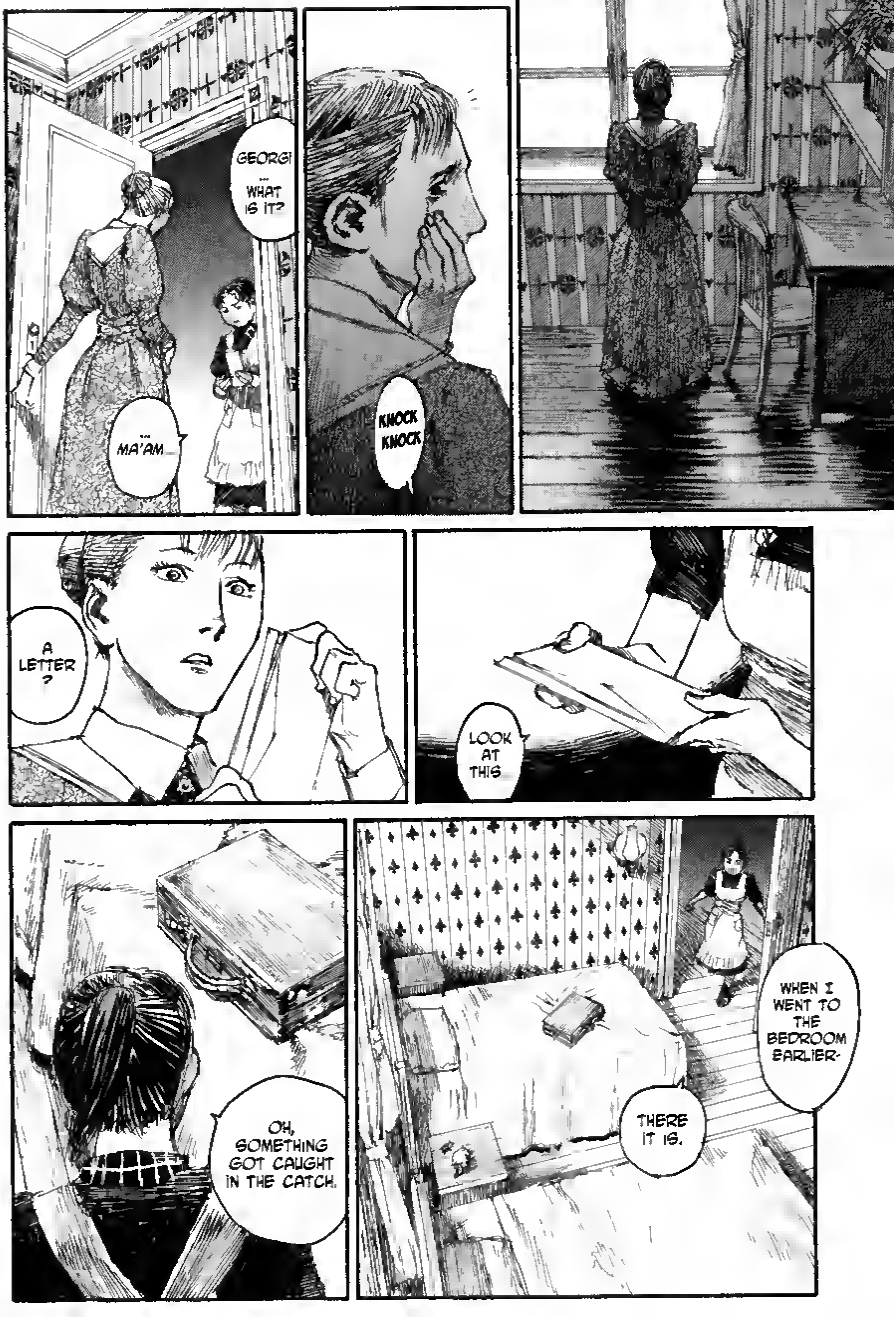
...JEN...

BUT WHAT WAS SHE DOING AROUND THE OLD WELL?
... SHE SAID THAT HER LEGS WERE STILL WEAK...
...
...
...NO.... OHH...
...? THAT'S...

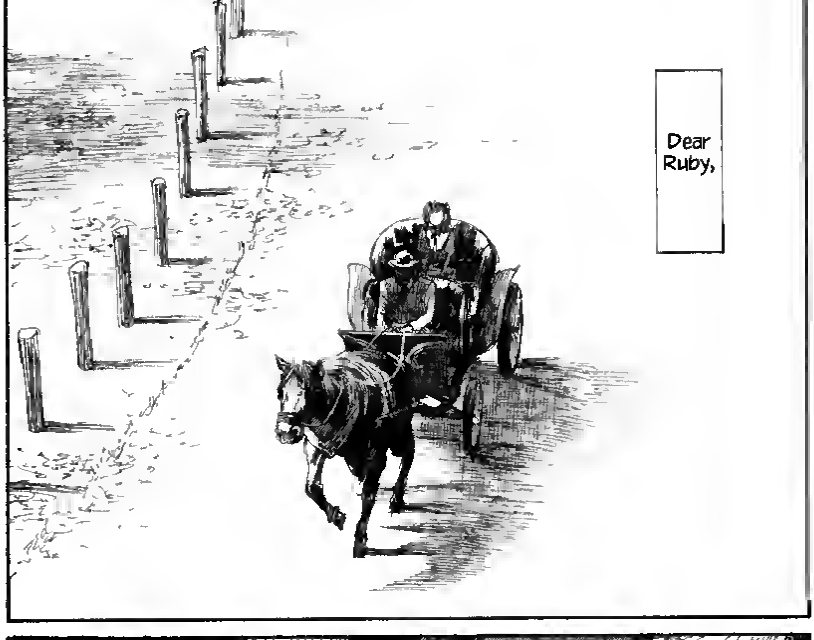
RUBY SPENCER.
HEAD-MASTER ...
I KNOW THIS ISN'T THE BEST TIME... BUT I HAVE URGENT NEWS
I WENT TO THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE YESTERDAY AND TOLD HIM THE WHOLE STORY.
HE SENDS HIS CONDO-LENCES...
BUT RUBY,
HE WANTS TO ADOPT YOU IN HER PLACE...

AHH... I CAN GET MY OWN BAG ...
DON'T BE SILLY! YOU HAVE YOUR SHOES ON ALREADY
THE COACH IS HERE.
OKAY.
WHERE'S YOUR BAG? IN YOUR BED-ROOM?
GEORGI, GO GET IT FOR HER.
IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS, MA'AM.
I'M SORRY. IF IT HAD BEEN A BETTER TIME..
WE'D HAVE THROWN A HUGE PARTY TO SEND YOU OFF...
I HOPE YOU'LL BE HAPPY.. FOR JEN'S SAKE TOO.
...
...
...




GEORGI
...WHAT IS IT?
...MA'AM...
KNOCK KNOCK
A LETTER?
LOOK AT THIS.
OH, SOMETHING GOT CAUGHT IN THE CATCH.
THERE IT IS.
WHEN I WENT TO THE BEDROOM EARLIER.

...THAT'S THE LETTER FROM THAT TIME..
HUH?
I ONLY WANTED TO TAKE A PEEK AND PUT IT BACK! BUT...
GEORGI! WHAT YOU HAVE DONE..
"...DEAR RUBY,"
?
I... I HAD TO SHOW IT TO YOU, MA'AM..
BUT... AFTER LOOKING AT IT,

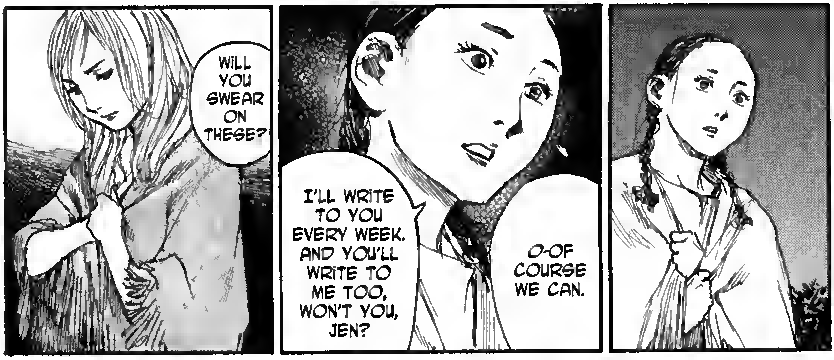

Dear Ruby,

This is the last thing I can do for you, so that you can be happy someday.
Don't be sad.

I've never told anyone before this, but your father is the current head of the MacAllister family, Lord Rudolph MacAllister.
I told you that your father disappeared before you were born, but that was a lie.

When I was young, I worked as a kitchen maid in the MacAllister household. The young Rudolph and I had a secret love affair.
That was when you were conceived.
However — there wasn't a happy ending for our relationship, of course. I was thrown out when they found that I was pregnant.
... however,
But more than anything else, I pity you. You have noble blood running through your veins, but you have to endure so much hardship.
My own life has been filled with nothing but misery...
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT, RUBY...?

CAN WE STILL BE FRIENDS FOREVER EVEN IF I'M NOT ADOPTED INTO THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY?
JEN.

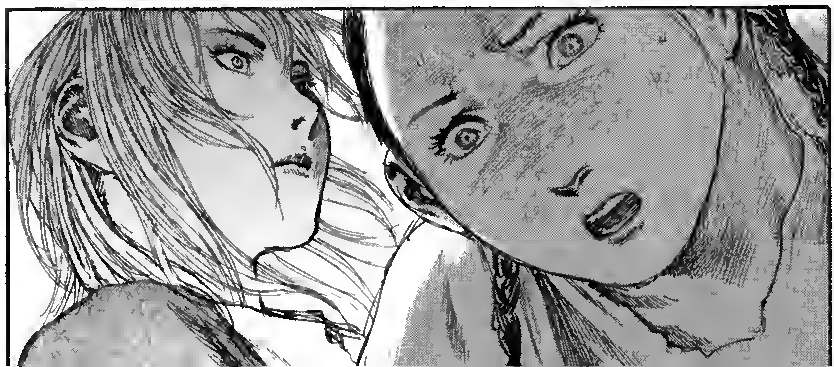

WILL YOU SWEAR ON THESE?
I'LL WRITE TO YOU EVERY WEEK. AND YOU'LL WRITE TO ME TOO, WON'T YOU, JEN?
O-OF COURSE WE CAN.

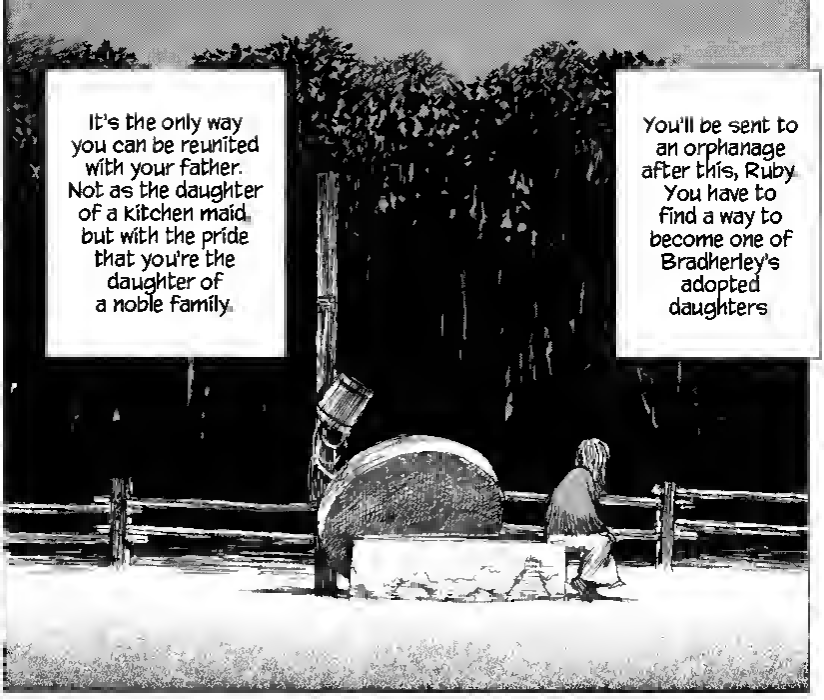
...YOU REMEMBERED.
OF COURSE I SWEAR ON THEM. THEY'RE THE BOND.. THAT LINKS US FOREVER ...
THOSE HATS...

I recently heard a rumor, Ruby,

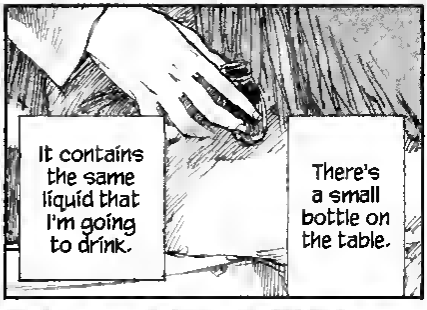
That the great Bradherley family is adopting orphans to train them for an opera troupe.

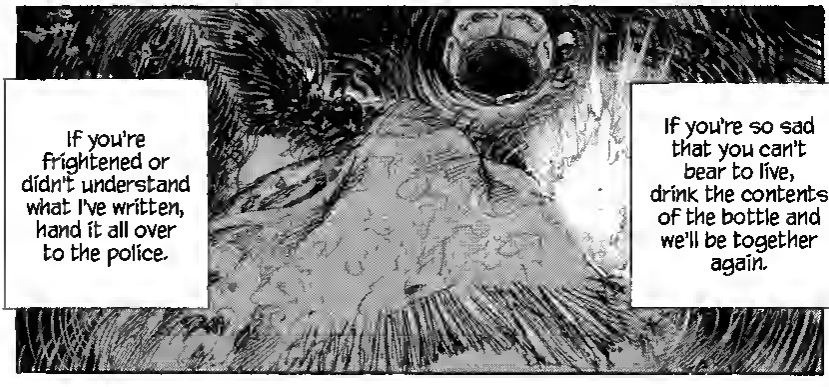
I think I'll gamble on this... there's nothing more I can give you.

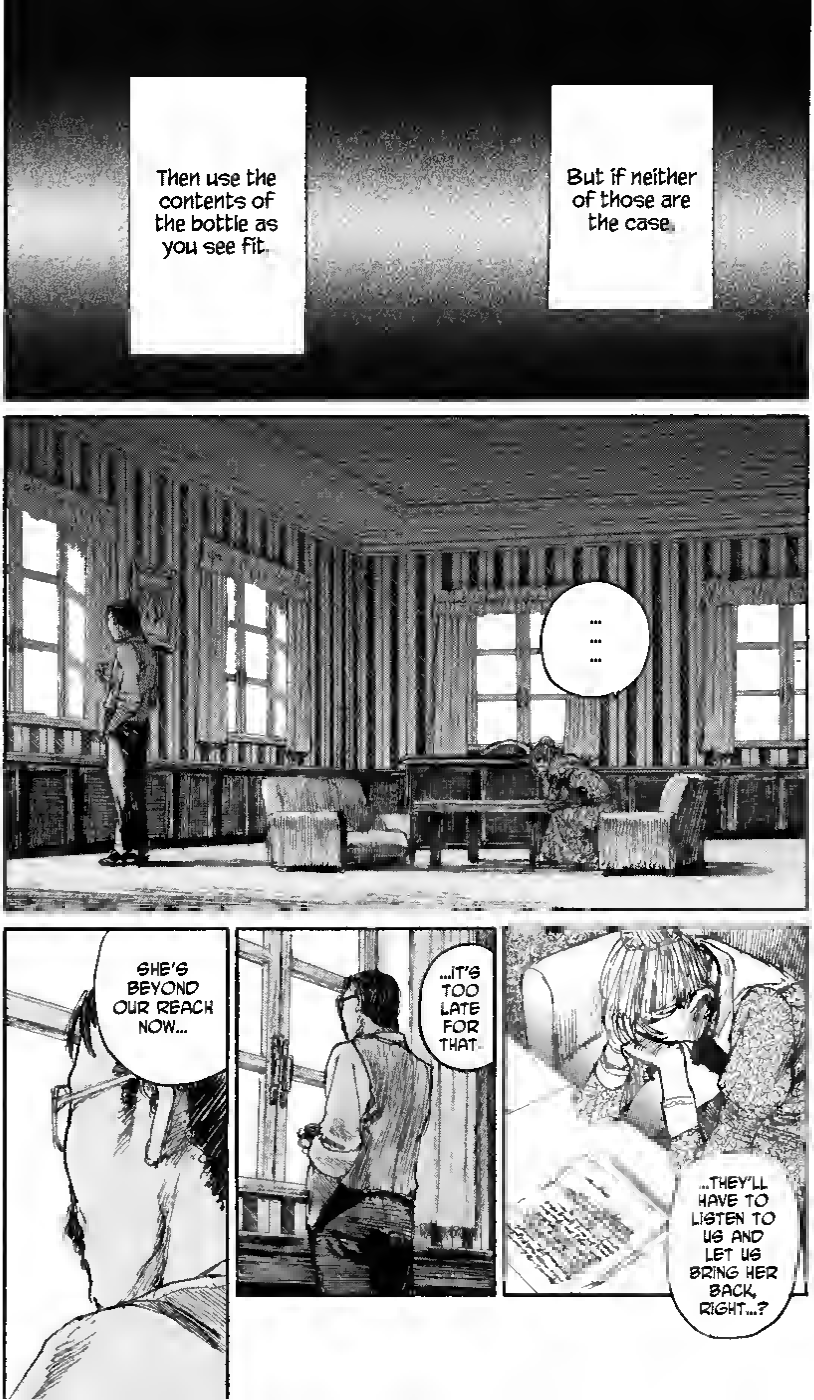



It's the only way you can be reunited with your father. Not as the daughter of a kitchen maid, but with the pride that you're the daughter of a noble family.
You'll be sent to an orphanage after this, Ruby. You have to find a way to become one of Bradherley's adopted daughters

There are 3 things you can do with that bottle.


It contains the same liquid that I'm going to drink.
There's a small bottle on the table.


If you're frightened or didn't understand what I've written, hand it all over to the police.
If you're so sad that you can't bear to live, drink the contents of the bottle and we'll be together again.


Then use the contents of the bottle as you see fit.
But if neither of those are the case...
...
...
...
SHE'S BEYOND OUR REACH NOW...
...IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT.
...THEY'LL HAVE TO LISTEN TO US AND LET US BRING HER BACK, RIGHT...?

PUNISHED HARSHLY
BUT IF SHE REALLY DID IT... I'M SURE SHE'LL BE PUNISHED SOMEDAY.
I KNOW... I DESERVE TO BE PUNISHED TOO.
— DEAR GOD,
END

Chapter 6

濺覆う銀

SAVE HER SNOWY NECK

I've heard about you from Powie... welcome to Hensley,

Mr Kenneth Irving.

Your job is simple. You'll be doing about the same thing as at Hughes Hill.

Though there is a small difference...

Do you know how Hensley prison differs from Hughes Hill?

Oh... I see you've already heard of "Plan 1-14" — we also call it the "Paschal festival".

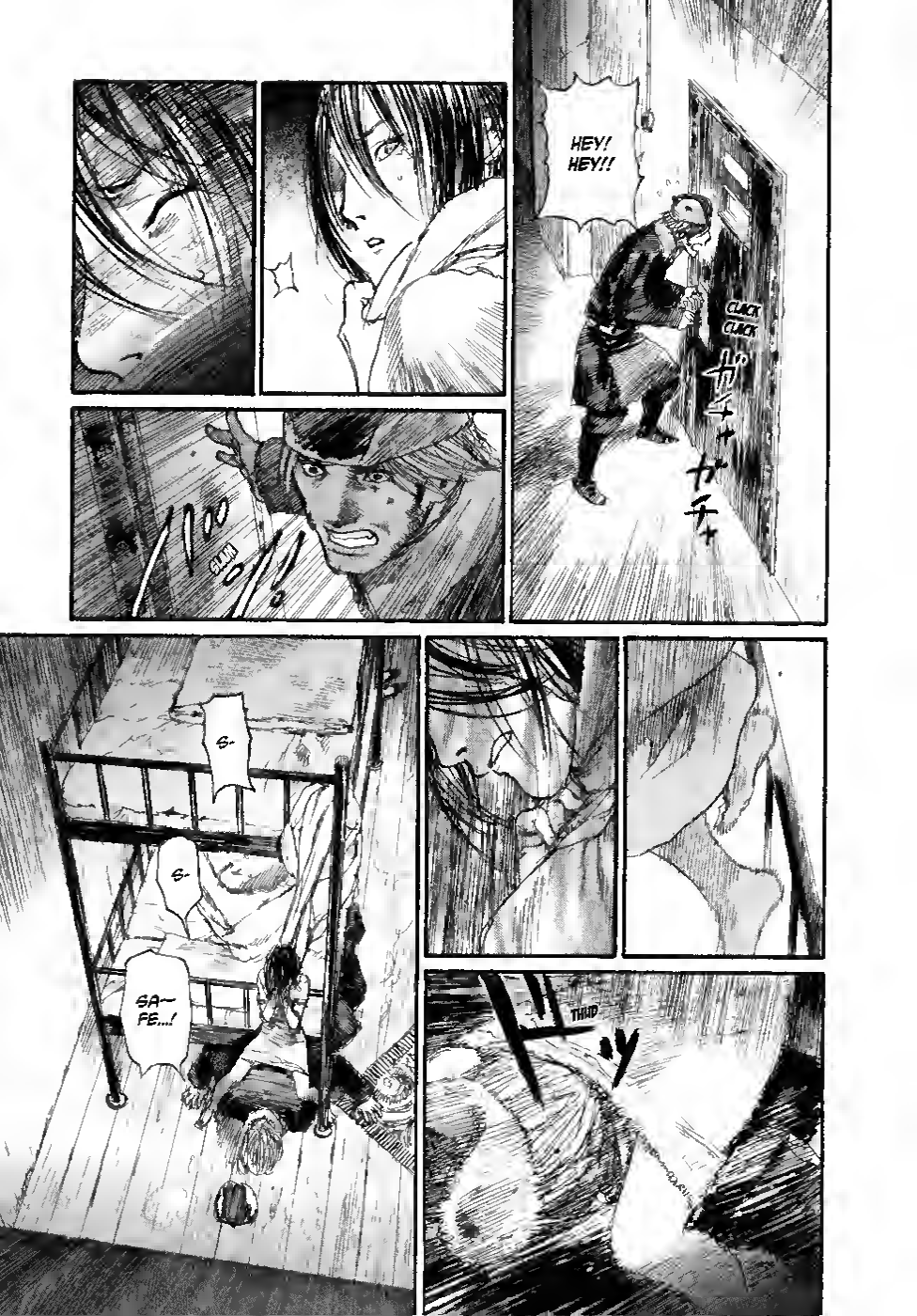
All right then. In that case, you can start work tomorrow...

The biggest worry is if they get sick.

Their condition can deteriorate quickly due to stress and physical weakness —

If they sit around for long periods doing nothing, you should go into the room to check on them. But lock the door, just like you would for a prisoner.
Well, you should call the doctor if they start throwing up or having convulsions.
IF I WERE IN THEIR SHOES, THE THOUGHT OF SUICIDE WOULD SURELY CROSS MY MIND AT LEAST ONCE...
THAT... SEEMS STRANGE TO ME.
BUT IT DOESN'T HAPPEN OFTEN. WELL, I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER ONE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ANYONE FIRST. JUST GO IN AND STOP THEM.
FINALLY, THERE'S SUICIDE
IN ORDER TO COMMIT SUICIDE, YOU FIRST NEED TO KNOW HOW TO DO IT.
YOU SEE, MR IRVING,

...?
WHAT'S
SHE
DOING?
GAH!!

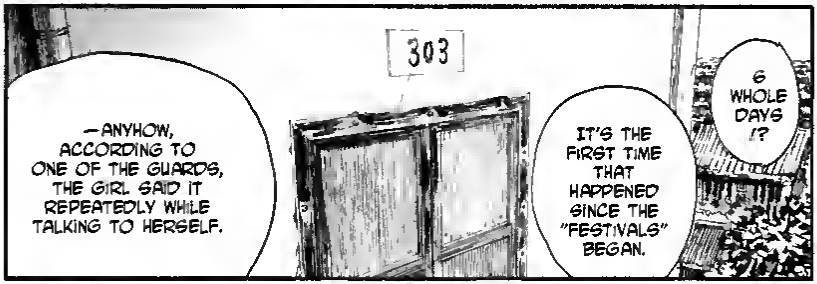

HEY!
HEY!!
CLACK
CLACK
ガチャガチャ
S-
S-
SA~
FE...!
THUD

THERE'S NO WAY TO SAVE SOMEONE CHOKED LIKE THAT.
HMM, I'D BETTER LOCK THE DOOR.
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
..A YEAR AGO,
HUH...
BUT HEY...
WHO DID YOU LEARN THAT FROM?
...I SEE.
OH YES... SHE CAME FROM AN ORPHANAGE.
MY FATHER ...
A YEAR AGO...

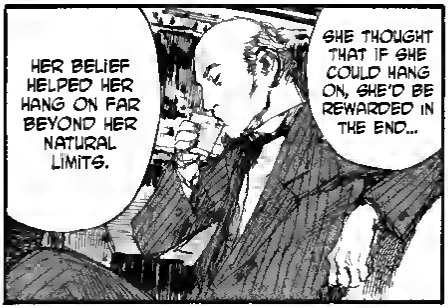
...WHY DID YOU DO IT?
WHY...?
IN ANY CASE, YOU HAVE TO STOP DOING THIS.
... WHY?
I HATE IT... ENOUGH ...
HEY... WILL IT BE THE SAME AGAIN TOMORROW ...?
...IT HURTS SO MUCH... SO BAD...
...WHAT SHOULD I DO?
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN SAY TO CONSOLE HER... NOT IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS
I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE ORPHAN-AGE...

WELL THEN, TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO HER NEXT TIME.
SHE TRIED IT 3 MORE TIMES BEFORE MY SHIFT ENDED...
LAUGH IF YOU LIKE, BUT THIS IS SERIOUS
HMM.
HAHAHA... THAT'S PRETTY FAST.
AHH, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT RULE EXISTED!
OF COURSE! IN THAT CASE...
HAHAHA...
DON'T BE SILLY. THERE'S NO SUCH THING.
...?
SHE'LL BE TAKEN TO THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE IF SHE CAN ENDURE ONE WEEK...?

ONE OF THE "LAMBS" SURVIVED FOR 6 DAYS.
THE YEAR BEFORE LAST, IN... CARDIFF PRISON, I THINK,


303
—ANYHOW, ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE GUARDS, THE GIRL SAID IT REPEATEDLY WHILE TALKING TO HERSELF.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME THAT HAPPENED SINCE THE "FESTIVALS" BEGAN.
6 WHOLE DAYS!?

AT THE END OF THE DAY... IT WASN'T TRUE.
...BUT,

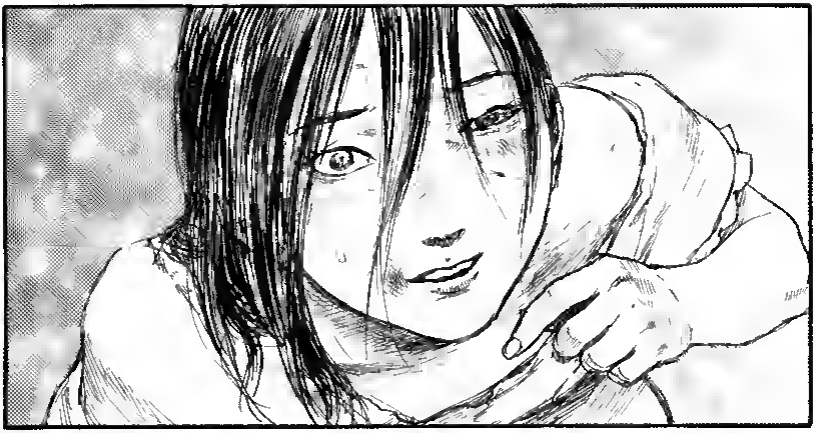

HER BELIEF HELPED HER HANG ON FAR BEYOND HER NATURAL LIMITS.
SHE THOUGHT THAT IF SHE COULD HANG ON, SHE'D BE REWARDED IN THE END...

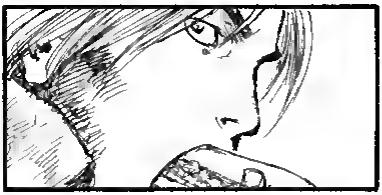
SO YOU HAVE A CHOICE.
OR SO I HEARD.
THAT'S RIGHT. IT WAS A FALSE HOPE. IT ONLY SERVED TO CONSOLE HER. WE WERE PREPARED TO POISON HER IF SHE SURVIVED BEYOND A WEEK...

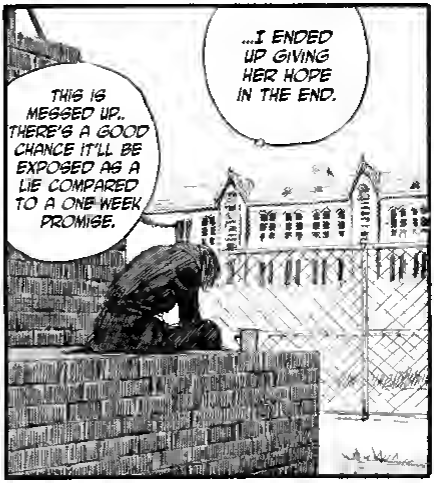
... IT'S WRONG TO DECIDE BASED ON WHICH IS WORSE, ISN'T IT?
AHH! SHE'S AT IT AGAIN!
HEY!
!
NO!!
PLEASE ... LET ME DIE.
LET HER DESPAIR AND CUT HER LIFE SHORT,
OR GIVE HER HOPE TO ENDURE MORE SUFFERING WHICH IS A BETTER FATE?

PLEASE..
JUST 2 DAYS AND SHE'S ALREADY LIKE THIS. HOW HORRIBLE..
EVEN A WEEK MIGHT BE TOO LONG TO GIVE HER HOPE..
...!
WHEN MORNING COMES.. I'LL GO MAD
I DON'T WANT TO FACE TOMORROW.. I DON'T WANT IT...
I WANT TO JOIN MY DAD.
I SEE.. THAT'S A SHAME.
PLEASE..
I'M BEGGING YOU.

IF YOU CAN HANG ON FOR A FEW MORE DAYS,
YOU COULD GO MEET LORD BRADHERLEY.
...BUT...
I CAN'T HOLD ON FOR SO LONG...
AHH... IT'S JUST A WEEK...
...
...
...
I'LL TAKE YOU OUT OF HERE THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.
T-TWO DAYS.
H- h-hang on! What did I just say!?
DON'T BE SILLY. HOW COULD A LIAR BECOME A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS?
WAH... I DON'T BELIEVE I JUST SAID THAT.
... YOU'RE LYING.






...I ENDED UP GIVING HER HOPE IN THE END.
THIS IS MESSED UP. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE IT'LL BE EXPOSED AS A LIE COMPARED TO A ONE WEEK PROMISE.

...WHAT'S THAT COACH?

...IF SHE DIES, SHE'LL LEAVE LIKE THAT...
BUT COULD SHE MAKE IT OUT THAT WAY ALIVE...?

AH, A GIRL'S CORPSE..?
UGH NOT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SEE WHILE EATING

I CAN'T DEPEND ON A WHOLE BUNCH OF PEOPLE FEELING SORRY FOR HER
THAT'S NO GOOD EITHER WHAT IF ONE OF THEM THINKS TWICE?
IT'S TOO DIFFICULT... WHAT OTHER WAYS ARE THERE?
WELL, I'VE HEARD OF IT, BUT I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT DRUGS TO USE
BUT IF THERE ARE DRUGS TO MAKE HER APPEAR DEAD...
I'M SURE HE'LL CHECK THE CORPSE WHEN IT'S TRANSFERRED INTO A COFFIN
THERE'S SOMEONE NEXT TO THE DRIVER... HE'S PROBABLY THERE TO SUPERVISE
NO, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
AHH... SORRY.
IT'S NOT THAT ONE. THE MAIL FOR THIS PRISON IS IN BAG 3.
WOW, IT'S HUGE.

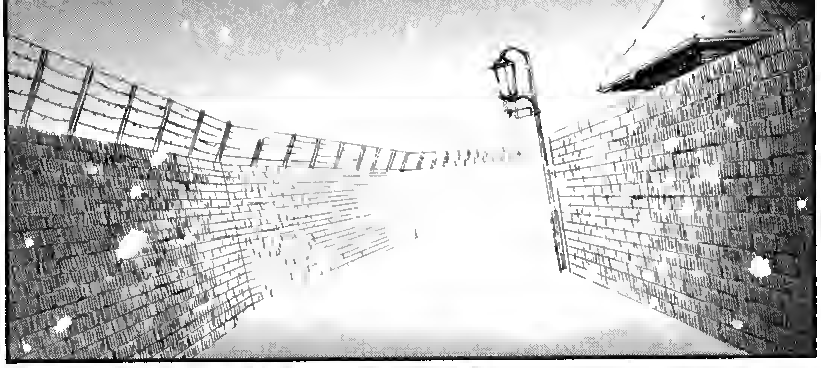
HEY, YOU!!
...AHH, I SEE.
I WAS FEELING COLD, SO I DECIDED TO TAKE THE SHEETS FROM THE UPPER BUNK.
UMM...
HUH?
AFTER WHAT I TOLD YOU YESTERDAY, WHY ARE YOU...
I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS SEVERAL TIMES,
AND SOMEONE SLAPPED ME UNTIL I WOKE UP.
LIKE TO STRANGLE ME
A FEW OF THE MEN...

I FELT A LITTLE HAPPIER THEN... I FELT AS IF I WAS CLOSER TO SEEING MY DAD AGAIN.
THAT'S WHY I WELCOMED IT... I PRAYED THAT IT WOULD HAPPEN
THE PAIN AND THE MEN'S VOICES FADED AWAY.
AT THOSE TIMES, EVEN THOUGH IT REALLY HURT,
AGAIN AND AGAIN... UNTIL YESTER-DAY.
SO THE PRISON STAFF CHECK THE MAIL ONLY BEFORE IT'S LOADED INTO YOUR COACH?
I JUST WANTED TO CONFIRM SOMETHING, MR HARRISON.
...I HOPE YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF DOING SOMETHING STUPID.
— THAT'S CORRECT, RIGHT?
MEANING THAT AFTER THE BAGS ARE PACKED, NO ONE LOOKS INSIDE UNTIL IT REACHES THE POST OFFICE?

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH MONEY THE PRISONERS HAVE...
BUT WE ONLY GET A FEW HUNDRED LETTERS FROM THIS PRISON EVERY MONTH
BUT WHAT ABOUT A LITTLE GIRL...?
IF A GROWN MAN TRIES TO HIDE IN ONE OF THE BAGS, HE'S SURE TO BE DISCOVERED
D-DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE PROPOSING...?
THAT'S FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN HELPING A PRISONER TO ESCAPE...
MR HARRISON... IT'S ONLY IF SHE SURVIVES PAST TODAY —
ONLY IF SHE SURVIVES PAST TODAY...
...
...
...
...ALL RIGHT.

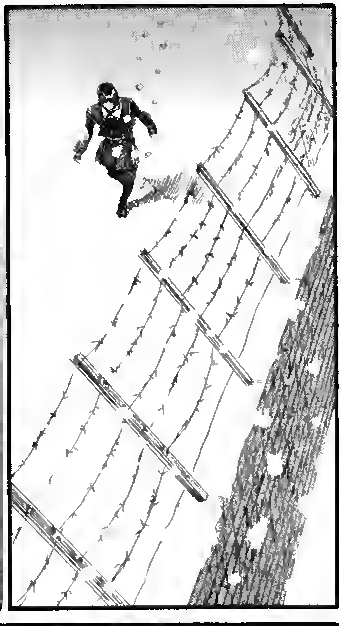
...
YEAH...
I CAN STAND...
—
LILLA, CAN YOU STAND?
...I... HUNG ON...
...
YEAH...
LET'S GO... AS I PROMISED.
YEAH... YOU DID.

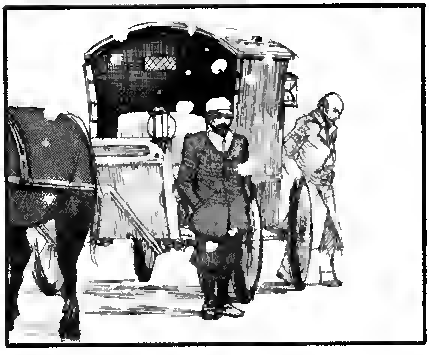
IT'S SNOWING, SO IT'LL BE PRETTY COLD NOW THAT THE SUN'S GONE DOWN.
PUT THIS ON.
CAN YOU WALK?
YEAH... I THINK SO..
HMM, SNOW IS GOOD. IT'LL HELP MUFFLE THE SOUND OF HER FOOTSTEPS...
REALLY... I DIDN'T NOTICE...
I THINK SHE'S HAVING CONVULSIONS!
HEY CHARLIE! CALL THE DOCTOR!
?
THEN GO TO THE LOCATION ON THIS MAP.
WAIT FOR 2 MINUTES AFTER I LEAVE THE ROOM.
A BAG? ...OK.
I'LL MEET YOU AS SOON AS I GET A BAG FOR YOU.

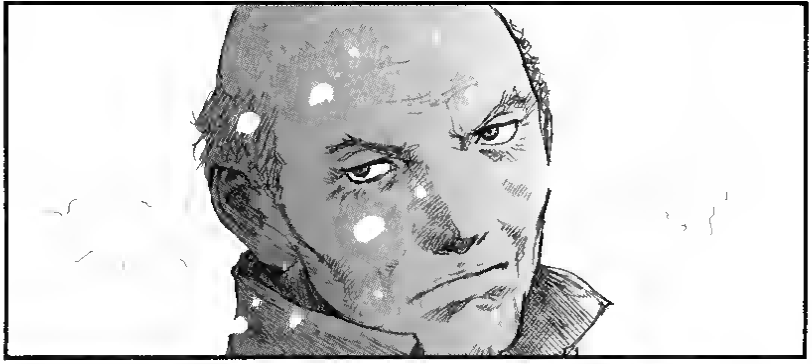


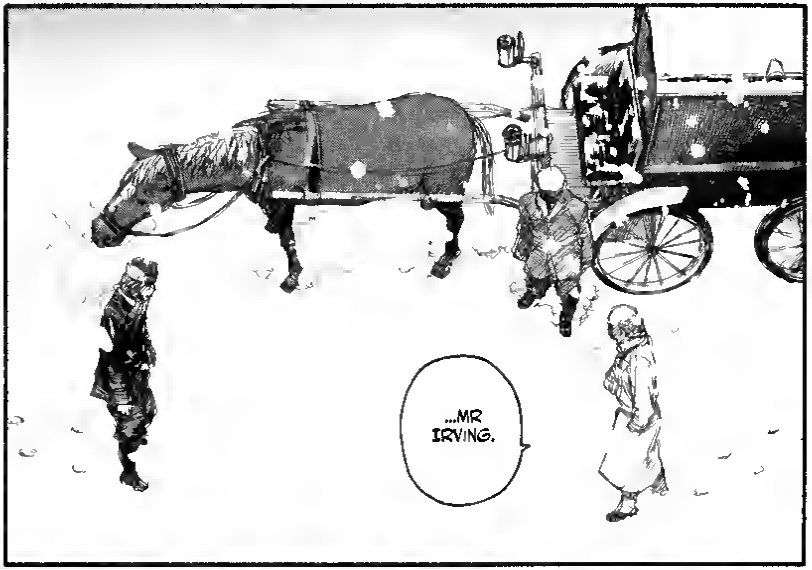
I HAVE TO FINISH THIS BY THEN AND MAKE THE BED...
MAKE IT LOOK LIKE SHE'S GONE TO SLEEP OR SOMETHING...

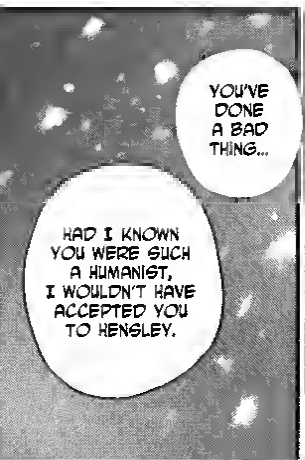
SHIT... I HAVE TO PULL THIS OFF!
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TRY THIS TWICE!
LET'S SEE... THE DOCTOR WILL TAKE ABOUT 10 MINUTES TO COME...

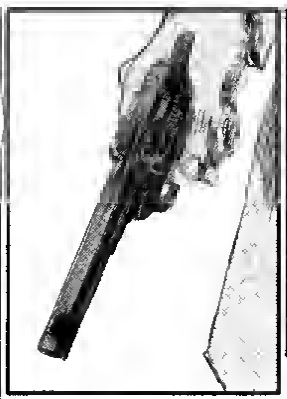







...MR IRVING.


YOU'VE DONE A BAD THING...
HAD I KNOWN YOU WERE SUCH A HUMANIST, I WOULDN'T HAVE ACCEPTED YOU TO HENSLEY.



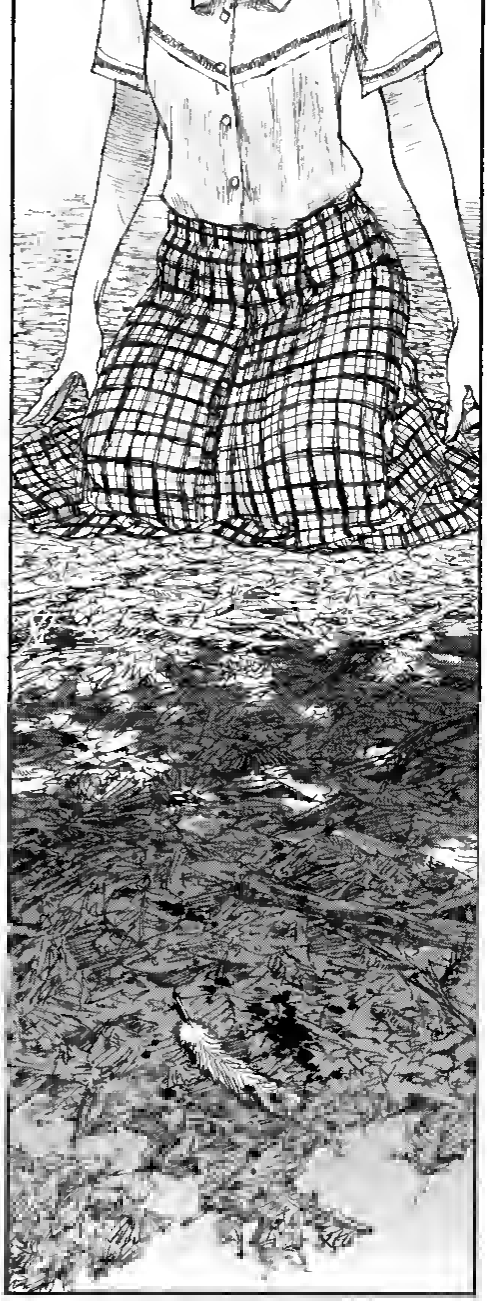
I SURPRISED MYSELF TOO.
HAHA...
DING

END

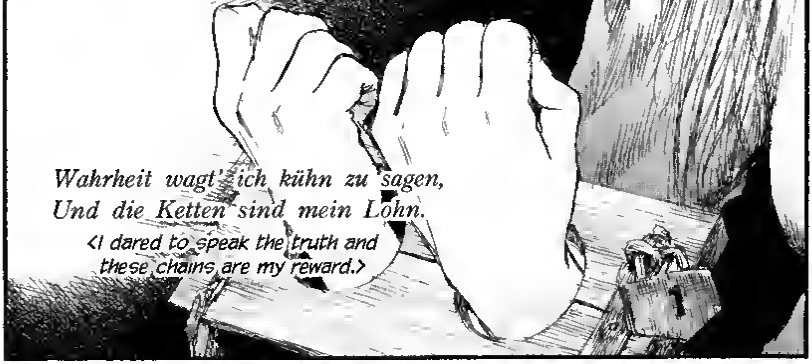
Chapter 7

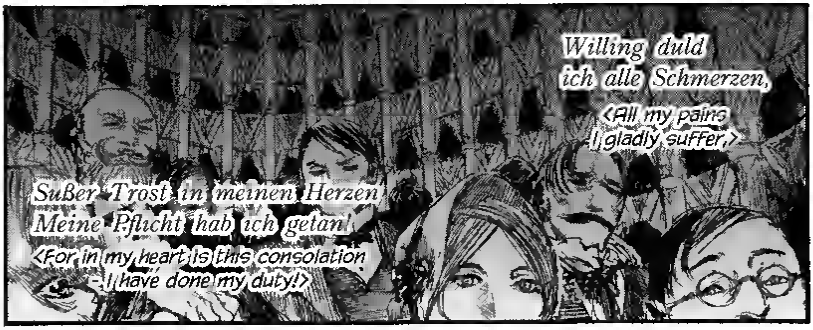
鳥は消えた

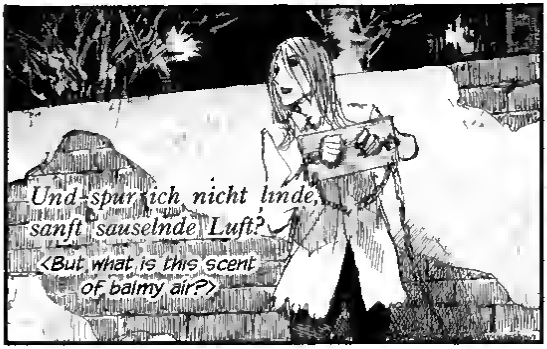
LOST WAGTAIL

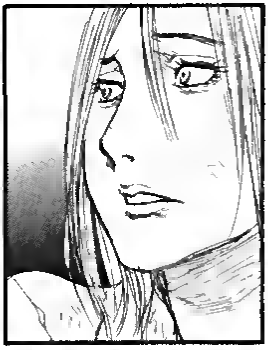


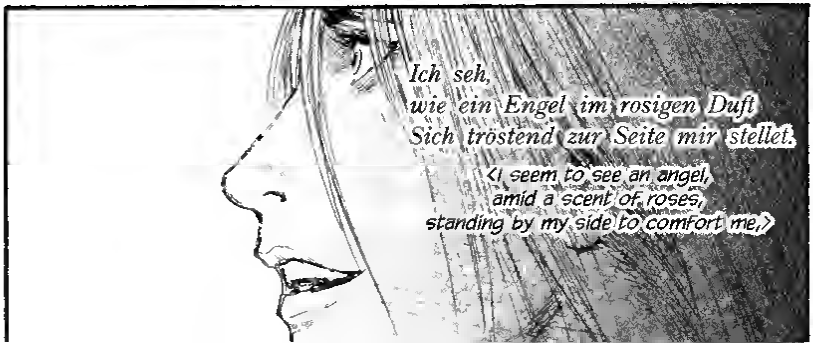
O grauenvolle Stille.
<How terrible this silence!>
..... Welch Dunkel hier!
<How dark it is here!>
Öd ist es um mich her
<Here in this void,>
Nichts lebet außer mir
<No living thing comes near.>

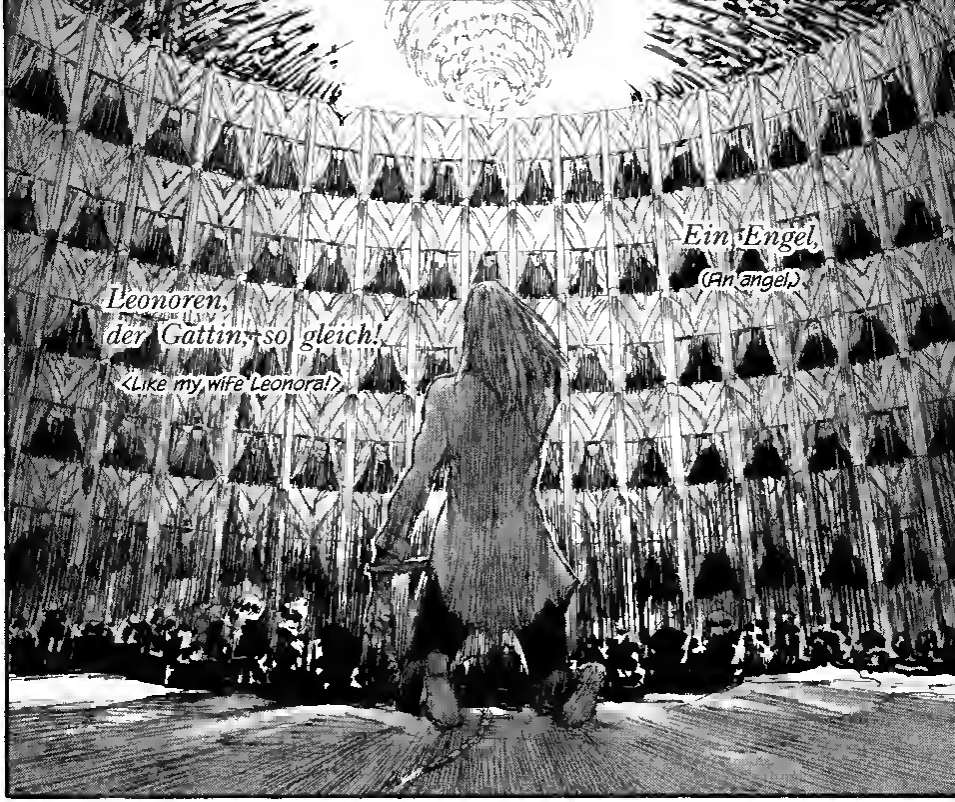

Wahrheit wagt' ich kühn zu sagen,
Und die Ketten sind mein Lohn.
<I dared to speak the truth and these chains are my reward.>


Willing duld
ich alle Schmerzen,
<All my pains I gladly suffer,>
Sußer Trost in meinen Herzen
Meine Pflicht hab ich getan!
<For in my heart is this consolation - I have done my duty!>

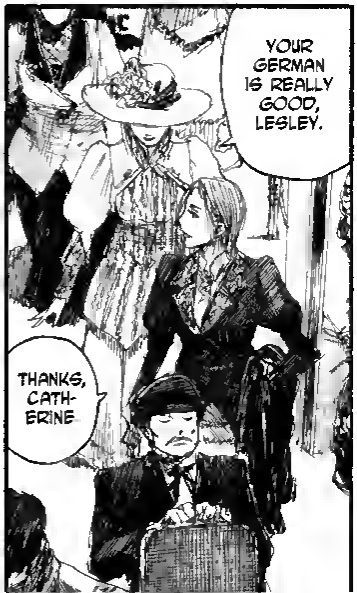

Und spur ich nicht linde,
sanft sauselnde Luft?
<But what is this scent of balmy air?>

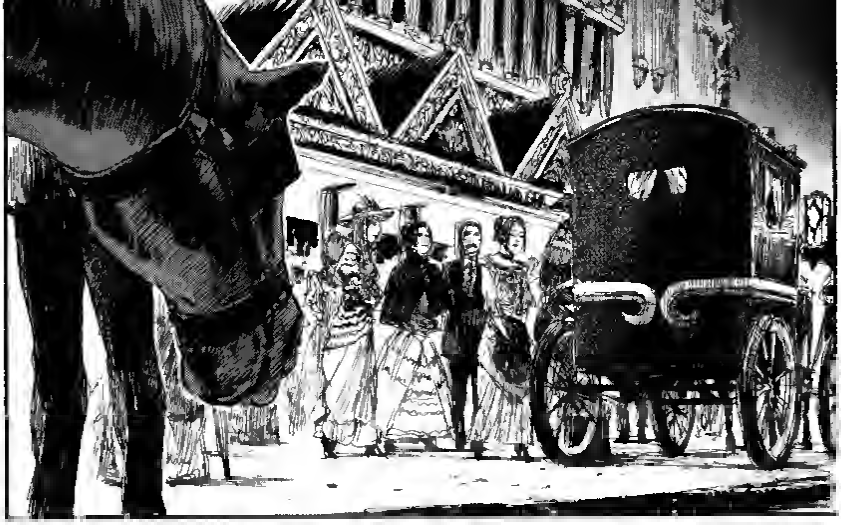


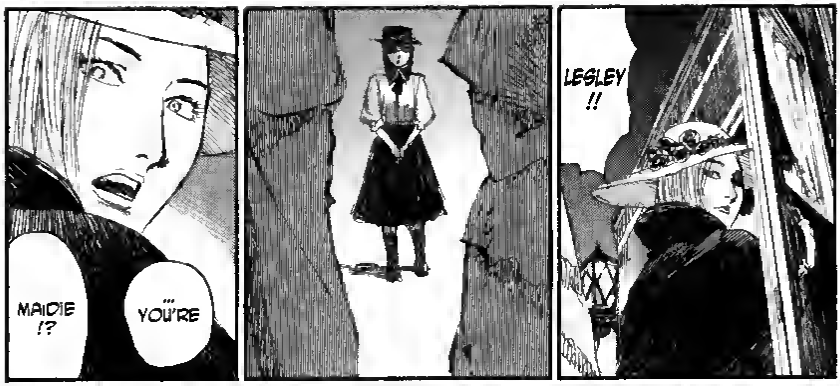

Ich seh,
wie ein Engel im rosigen Duft
Sich tröstend zur Seite mir stellet.
<I seem to see an angel, amid a scent of roses, standing by my side to comfort me,>


Ein Engel,
(An angel,)
Leonoren,
der Gattin, so gleich!
(Like my wife Leonora!)

WELL, THIS TIME I'M PLAYING A MAN TOO.
THEY KEEP CASTING ME AS A MAN, THOUGH. MAYBE I SHOULD CUT MY HAIR?
THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE LEONORA DISGUISES HERSELF AS A MAN

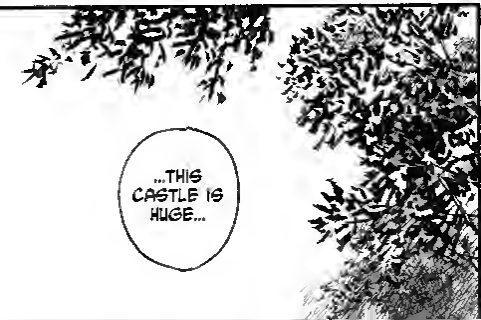

YOUR GERMAN IS REALLY GOOD, LESLEY.
THANKS, CATHERINE




MAIDIE !?
...YOU'RE
LESLEY !!

WERE THEY FROM THE SAME ORPHAN-AGE?
HEH... YOU SEE THIS EVERY SO OFTEN.

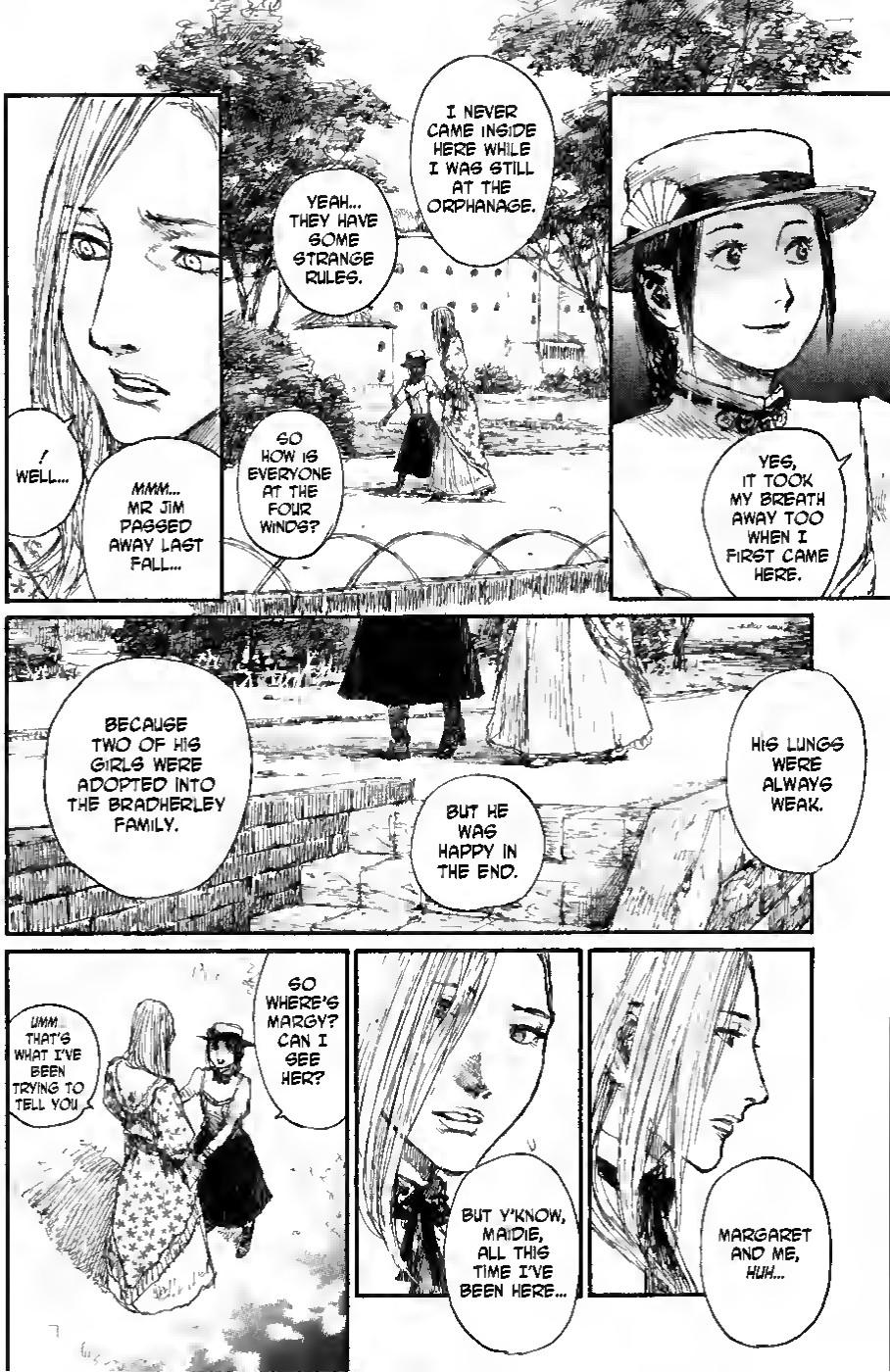
THERE'S A LOT OF HOUSEWORK, BUT MY FOSTER PARENTS ARE WONDERFUL PEOPLE.
THAT'S GREAT. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THEY'RE NICE PEOPLE
DID YOU COME ALL THE WAY FROM THE FOUR WINDS?
NOPE. I LEFT THE ORPHANAGE IN FEBRUARY. I'M LIVING IN HOCKNEY NOW.
OH YES, LESLEY.
HOW'S MARGARET?
GOOD WORK, LESLEY.
THERE'S A LETTER FOR YOU ON THE DESK.
THANKS, JANET. GOOD NIGHT.



Dear Lesley,

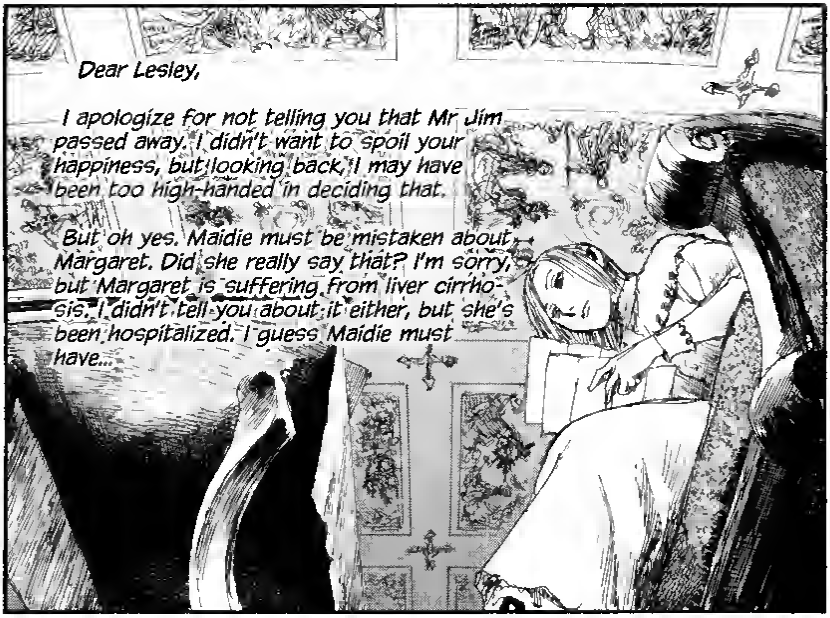
It's gotten warm, hasn't it? The Four Winds garden is full of daisies in bloom again this year. Have things changed over there?

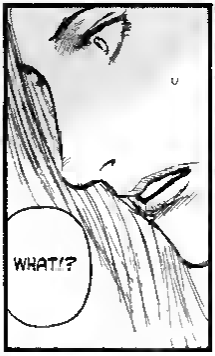
Thanks for the rare Mediterranean fruit you sent us. We started calling them "apples" though the shape isn't quite the same and the taste is quite unique. Everyone loved them, and Joseph and Owen ended up fighting over the last slice, as always...

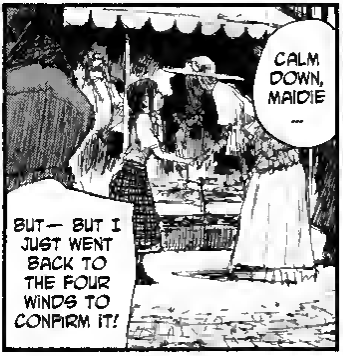

I NEVER CAME INSIDE HERE WHILE I WAS STILL AT THE ORPHANAGE.
YEAH... THEY HAVE SOME STRANGE RULES.
YES, IT TOOK MY BREATH AWAY TOO WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE.
SO HOW IS EVERYONE AT THE FOUR WINDS?
! WELL...
MMM... MR JIM PASSED AWAY LAST FALL...
BECAUSE TWO OF HIS GIRLS WERE ADOPTED INTO THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY.
BUT HE WAS HAPPY IN THE END.
HIS LUNGS WERE ALWAYS WEAK.
SO WHERE'S MARGY? CAN I SEE HER?
UMM... THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU.
BUT Y'KNOW, MAIDIE, ALL THIS TIME I'VE BEEN HERE...
MARGARET AND ME, HUH...

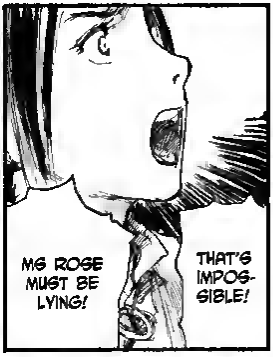
MARGARET BRUETTE?
NO, OUR FAMILY NEVER ADOPTED SUCH A PERSON...
NO... THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE !!
MAIDIE .. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS, BUT THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE..
THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS!
I WAS AT THE ORPHANAGE WHEN MARGARET LEFT!
REALLY ...? I'M SORRY.
I KNOW! I'LL WRITE TO MS ROSE TO DOUBLE-CHECK.
Nein, nein! <No! No!>
Ist das der Vorbote meines Todes? <Is that the signal for my death?>

Sei ruhig,
Sag ich dir!
<Keep calm!>
Vergiß nicht,
was du auch hören
und sehen magst,
<Whatever you may
hear and see,>
O meine Leonore!
So soll ich dich
nie wieder sehen?
<Oh my Leonora!
Will I ever see
you again...?>
Ja!——es gibt
eine Vorsehung!
<Yes... there is
a Providence!>
Daß überall eine
Vorsehung ist.
<Do not forget:
there is a Providence.>

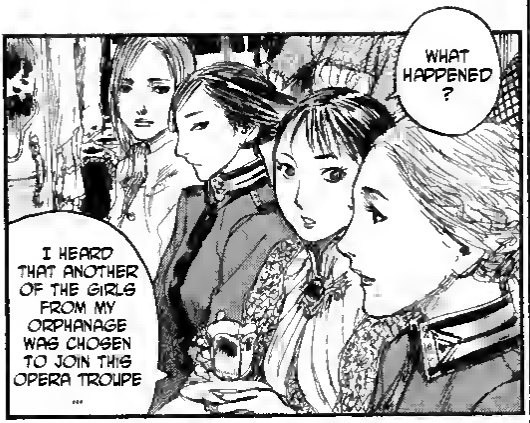

Dear Lesley,
I apologize for not telling you that Mr Jim passed away. I didn't want to spoil your happiness, but looking back, I may have been too high-handed in deciding that.
But oh yes. Maidie must be mistaken about Margaret. Did she really say that? I'm sorry, but Margaret is suffering from liver cirrhosis. I didn't tell you about it either, but she's been hospitalized. I guess Maidie must have...


WHAT!?


CALM DOWN, MAIDIE --
BUT— BUT I JUST WENT BACK TO THE FOUR WINDS TO CONFIRM IT!


MS ROSE MUST BE LYING!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

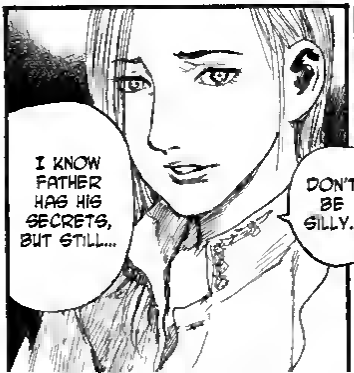
SHE TOLD ME THAT!
SHE'S LYING TO YOU, LESLEY!
MS ROSE TOLD ME THAT MARGY LEFT TO JOIN THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY!


WHAT HAPPENED ?
I HEARD THAT ANOTHER OF THE GIRLS FROM MY ORPHANAGE WAS CHOSEN TO JOIN THIS OPERA TROUPE ...

IT HAPPENED AT MY ORPHANAGE TOO.

I WAS REALLY HAPPY AT THE TIME,
BUT IN THE END... SHE NEVER CAME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HER.

HOW DID IT GO...? THEY SAY THERE'S ANOTHER BRADHERLEY EPISCOPAL OPERA TROUPE, AND ITS MEMBERS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
A RUMOR ?
OH, THAT REMINDS ME OF A RUMOR I HEARD.
WOW. THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD THAT.


I KNOW FATHER HAS HIS SECRETS, BUT STILL...
DON'T BE SILLY...

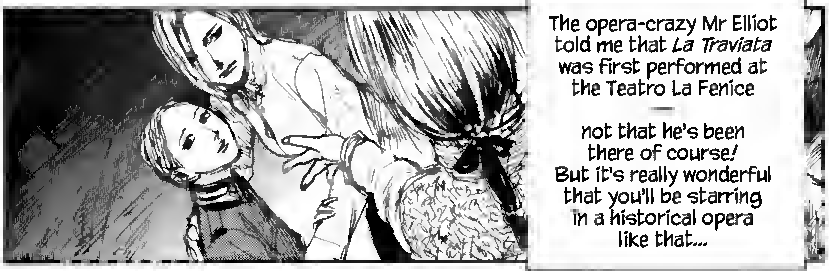
I TOLD YOU, IT'S JUST A RUMOR.
HUH!? THEN WHY DON'T WE KNOW ABOUT IT?

There were many restrictions imposed on us adopted daughters of the Bradherley family. So I sought the truth by writing letters to the orphanage — it's impersonal, but it's all I could do.
It got so bad that the family servants had to drag her away, and Father got angry when I tried to help her.
Maidie came to the castle repeatedly to ask about Margaret.
She had a good voice too... I'm sure she would have been chosen to join the opera troupe.
Margaret Bruette... was a pretty girl.
So who's lying?
The Four Winds orphanage ...? Or Maidie ...?
ON THE OTHER HAND, CATHERINE'S FRIEND AND MARGARET DISAPPEARED.. THOSE AREN'T JUST RUMORS.
BUT ANOTHER OPERA TROUPE...? WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE IS THAT?

A GROWN LADY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T BELIEVE SUCH RUBBISH.
YOUNG CHILDREN OFTEN FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY.
BUT THINK ABOUT IT. EVERY ORPHAN GIRL DREAMS OF JOINING THE MASTER'S OPERA TROUPE...
LESLEY... I'VE HEARD STORIES LIKE THAT BEFORE.
YOU REALLY THINK OF THEM A LOT, THAT'S GOOD... I'LL SEND IT OFF.
OH... ANOTHER LETTER?
Leonore! <Leonora!>
Dear Lesley,
I'm afraid I won't be able to attend your performance. I'm so sorry.
Durch welche Wunder! <Is this a miracle?>
Lesley!

But I'll send you a bouquet of daisies from the foothills behind the Four Winds. I hope they're still fresh when they reach you...

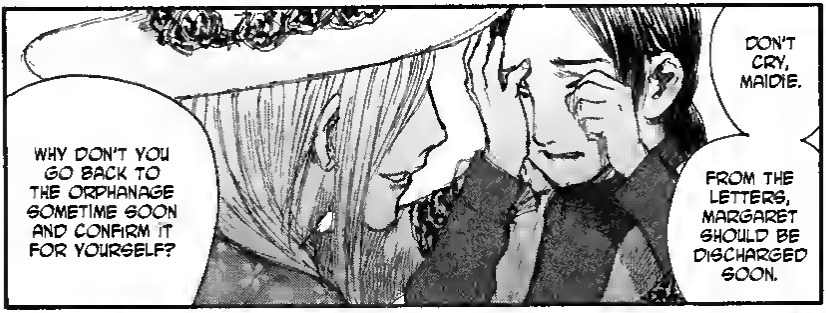
Dear Lesley,
I've heard Venice is a beautiful city.

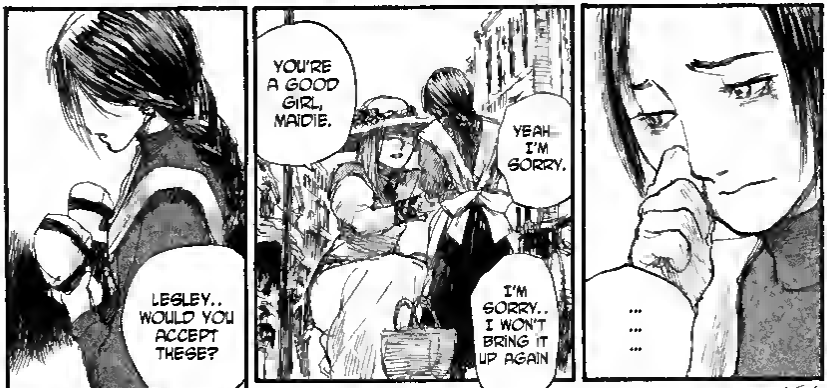

The opera-crazy Mr Elliot told me that *La Traviata* was first performed at the Teatro La Fenice
not that he's been there of course! But it's really wonderful that you'll be starring in a historical opera like that...

Dear Lesley,
Thanks for the present. I'm touched that you remembered.

Henry will turn 15 this year too; the same age you were when you left here.
It seems like it was just yesterday...

BUT... MARGARET IS...
GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, MAIDIE!!
A LADY LIKE YOU SHOULD BE THE MISTRESS OF HER OWN TIME, AND YET YOU —
YOU MUST HAVE GOTTEN CONFUSED. THE COACH TOOK MARGARET TO THE HOSPITAL.
I'VE WRITTEN TO HER SEVERAL TIMES SINCE THEN... THERE WASN'T ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS.
MAIDIE, MS ROSE WOULDN'T LIE.

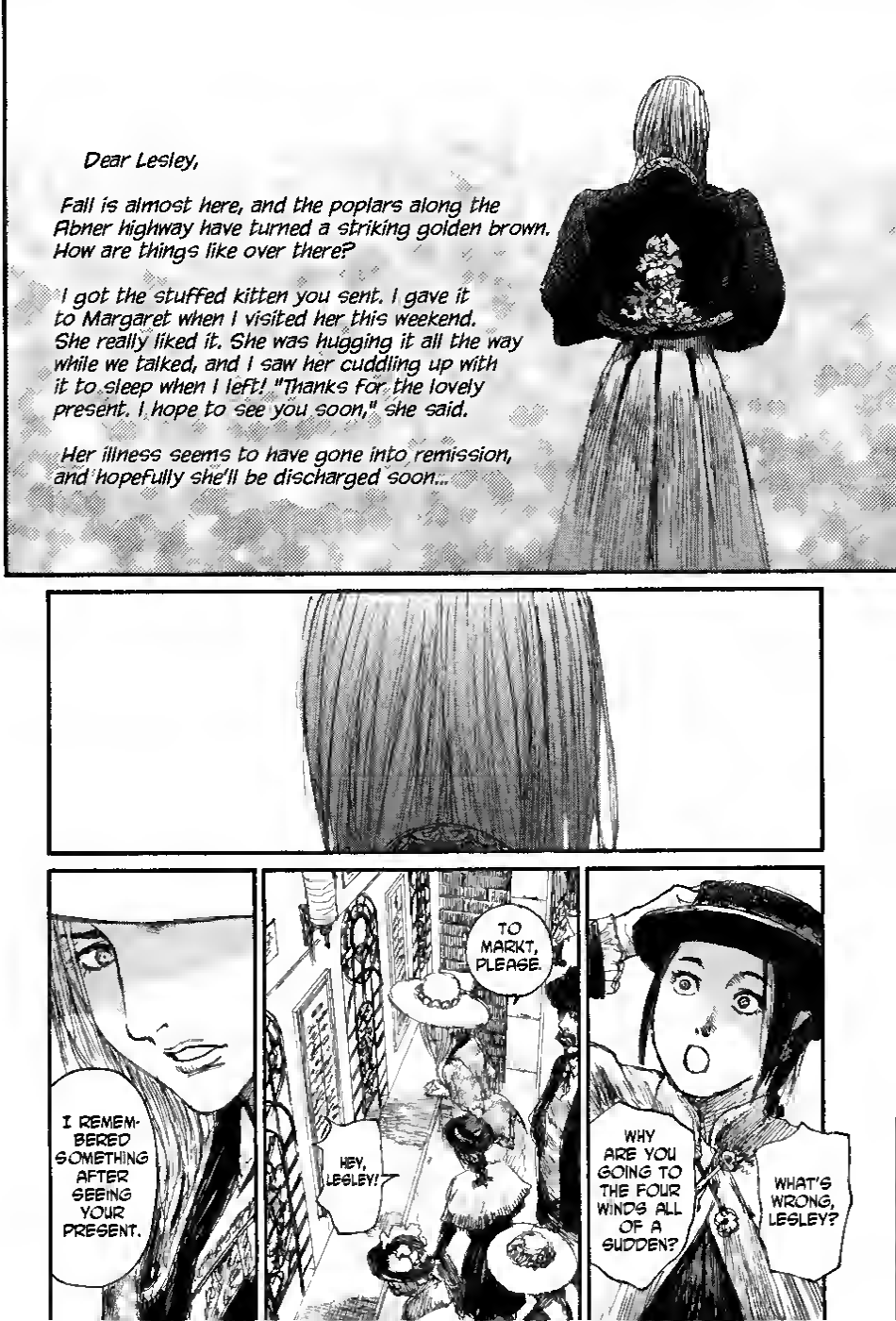

DON'T CRY, MAIDIE.
FROM THE LETTERS, MARGARET SHOULD BE DISCHARGED SOON.
WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO THE ORPHANAGE SOMETIME SOON AND CONFIRM IT FOR YOURSELF?

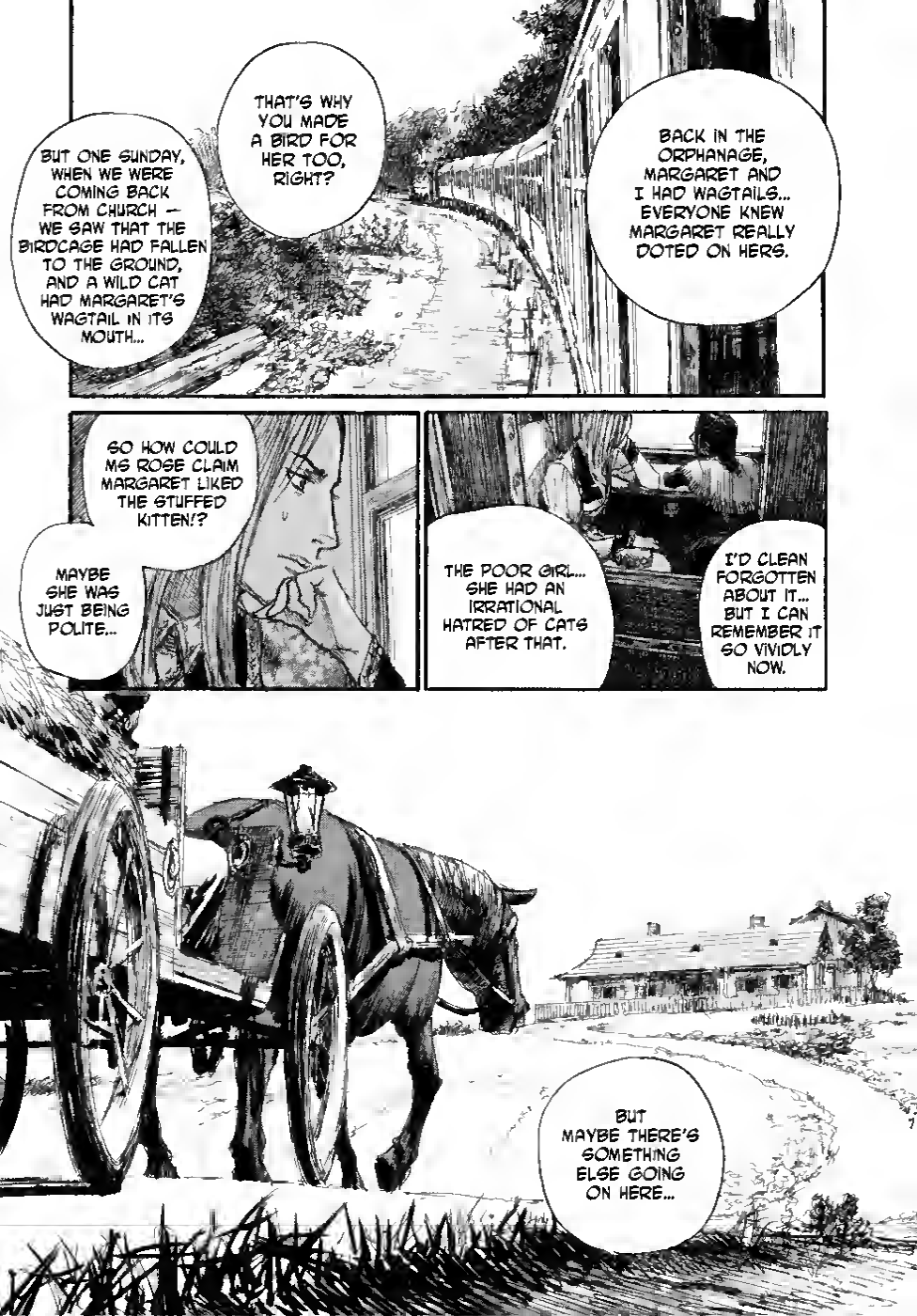

...
...
...
I'M SORRY.. I WON'T BRING IT UP AGAIN
YEAH... I'M SORRY.
YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL, MAIDIE.
LESLEY.. WOULD YOU ACCEPT THESE?

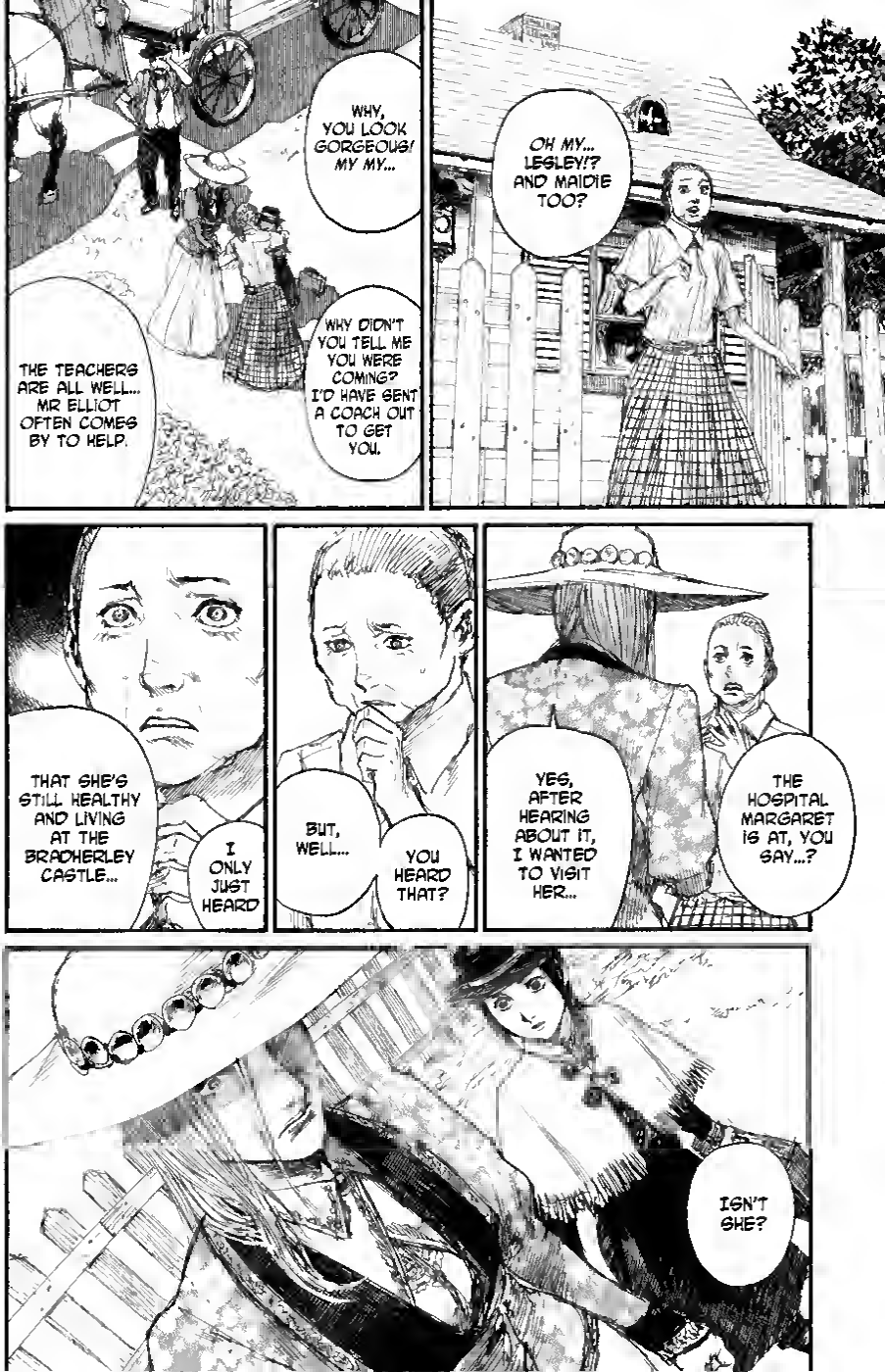
THOUGH I REALLY WANTED TO GIVE ONE TO MARGY MYSELF...
I MADE THEM FOR THE TWO OF YOU...
WON'T YOU?
YOU'LL COME BACK AND SEE ME AGAIN,
MAIDIE...

BIRDS, HUH...
MARGY ALSO LOVED THEM...
...
...
...
...THESE ARE REALLY BEAUTIFUL...

A LETTER FOR YOU, MISS.


Dear Lesley,
Fall is almost here, and the poplars along the Abner highway have turned a striking golden brown. How are things like over there?
I got the stuffed kitten you sent. I gave it to Margaret when I visited her this weekend. She really liked it. She was hugging it all the way while we talked, and I saw her cuddling up with it to sleep when I left! "Thanks for the lovely present. I hope to see you soon," she said.
Her illness seems to have gone into remission, and hopefully she'll be discharged soon...
I REMEMBERED SOMETHING AFTER SEEING YOUR PRESENT.
HEY, LESLEY!
TO MARKT, PLEASE.
WHY ARE YOU GOING TO THE FOUR WINDS ALL OF A SUDDEN?
WHAT'S WRONG, LESLEY?

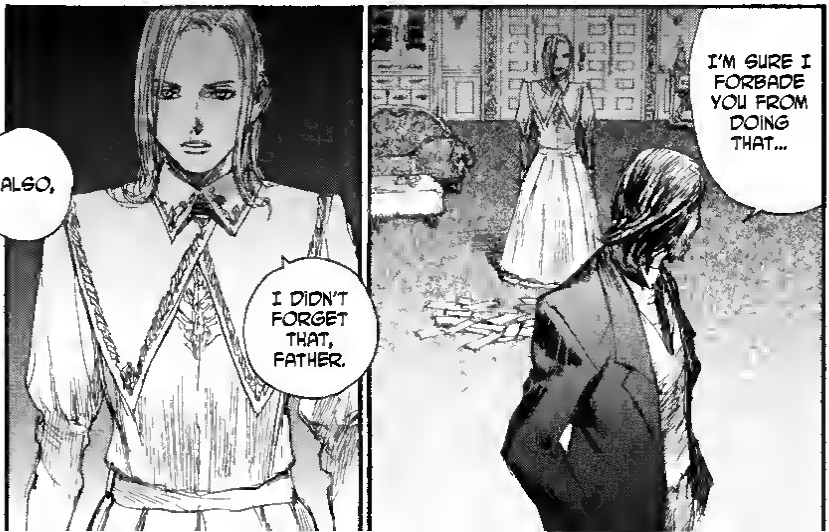

BACK IN THE ORPHANAGE, MARGARET AND I HAD WAGTAILS... EVERYONE KNEW MARGARET REALLY DOTED ON HERS.
THAT'S WHY YOU MADE A BIRD FOR HER TOO, RIGHT?
BUT ONE SUNDAY, WHEN WE WERE COMING BACK FROM CHURCH — WE SAW THAT THE BIRDCAGE HAD FALLEN TO THE GROUND, AND A WILD CAT HAD MARGARET'S WAGTAIL IN ITS MOUTH...
I'D CLEAN FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT... BUT I CAN REMEMBER IT SO VIVIDLY NOW.
THE POOR GIRL... SHE HAD AN IRRATIONAL HATRED OF CATS AFTER THAT.
SO HOW COULD MS ROSE CLAIM MARGARET LIKED THE STUFFED KITTEN!?
MAYBE SHE WAS JUST BEING POLITE...
BUT MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE GOING ON HERE...


WHY, YOU LOOK GORGEOUS! MY MY...
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME YOU WERE COMING? I'D HAVE SENT A COACH OUT TO GET YOU.
THE TEACHERS ARE ALL WELL... MR ELLIOT OFTEN COMES BY TO HELP.
OH MY... LESLEY!? AND MAIDIE TOO?
THAT SHE'S STILL HEALTHY AND LIVING AT THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE...
I ONLY JUST HEARD
BUT, WELL...
YOU HEARD THAT?
YES, AFTER HEARING ABOUT IT, I WANTED TO VISIT HER...
THE HOSPITAL MARGARET IS AT, YOU SAY...?
ISN'T SHE?

I NEED TO CONFIRM SOMETHING — PLEASE HURRY.
AHH, OF COURSE! OF COURSE!
COULD I SEE THEM PLEASE?
? OF COURSE, I KEPT THEM ALL...
TEACHER.
DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THE LETTERS I SENT YOU?
... what's going on...
I WAS REALLY TOUCHED THAT YOU WROTE SO OFTEN —
THESE SHOULD BE ALL OF THEM.

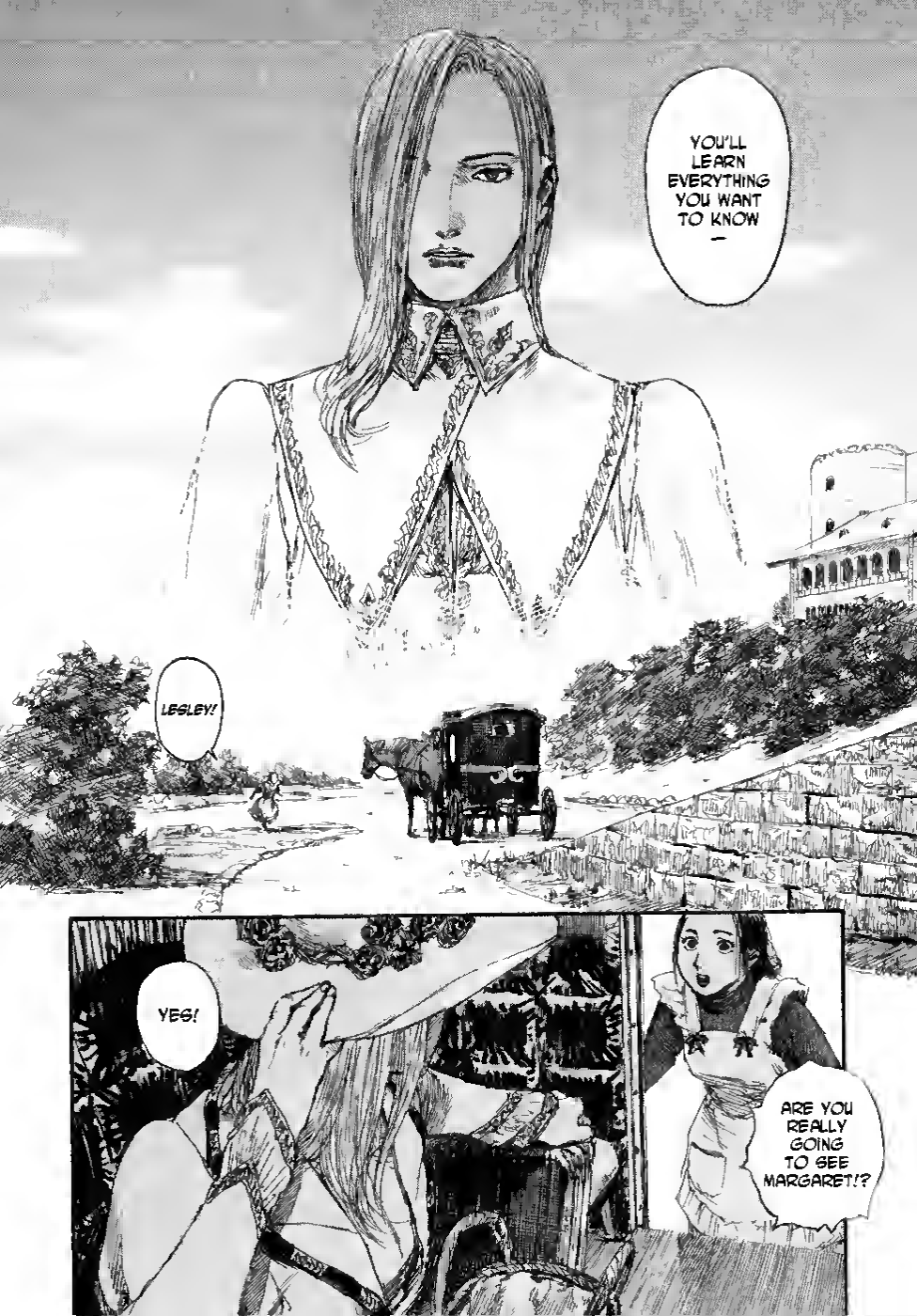
These aren't the letters I wrote!!
This isn't right!!

...JANET TOLD ME...
THAT YOU WENT BACK TO THE ORPHANAGE...

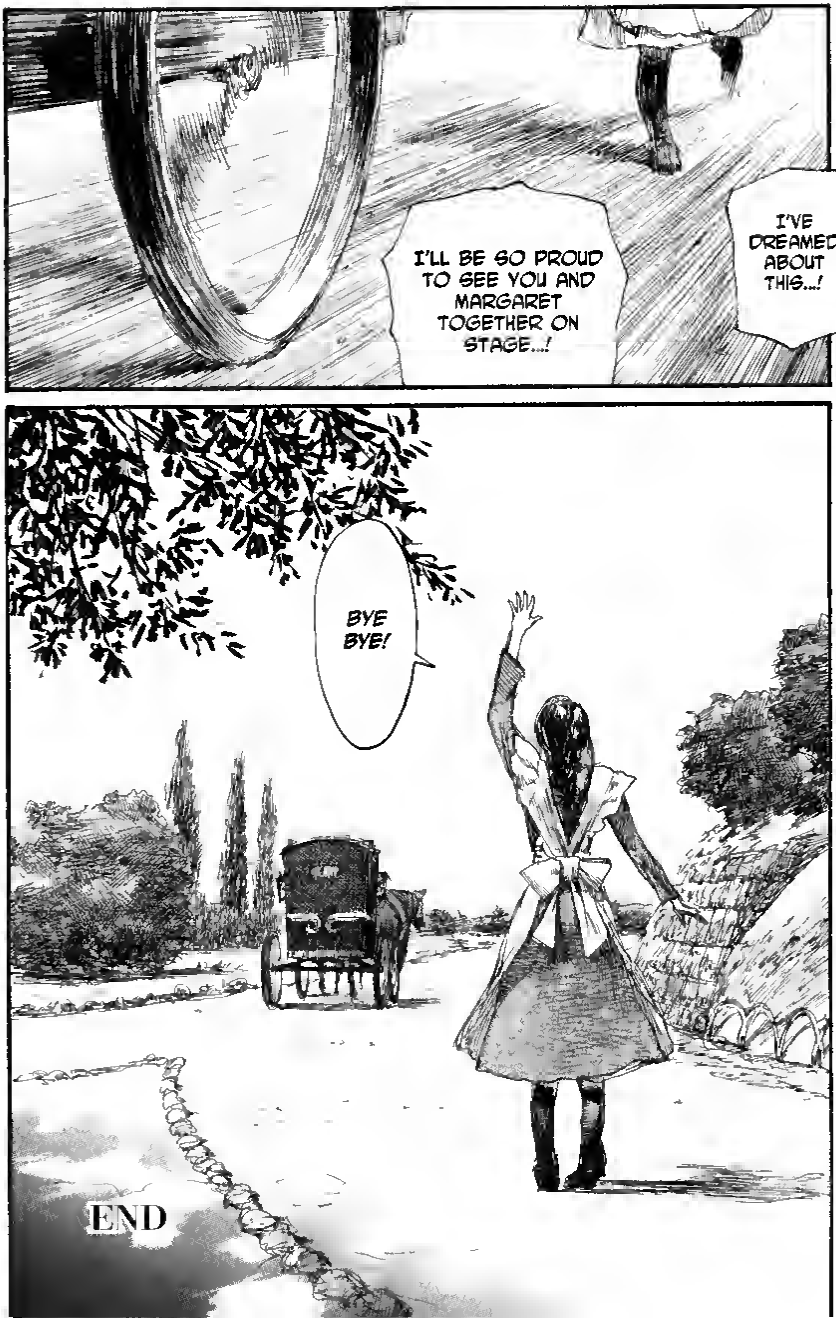

I'M SURE I FORBADE YOU FROM DOING THAT...
ALSO,
I DIDN'T FORGET THAT, FATHER.

I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT PROMISE TOO.
PEOPLE FROM THE ORPHANAGE ARE FORBIDDEN FROM VISITING US.
BUT... IS THAT REALLY THE REASON?
IT WAS TO PREVENT US FROM BEING HOMESICK... THAT'S WHAT WE WERE TOLD, AND I ACCEPTED IT.
I THOUGHT IT WAS UNFAIR, BUT I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS OUT OF THE ORDINARY.
WHO WROTE THESE LETTERS!?
MY OLD TEACHER AT THE FOUR WINDS GAVE ME THIS BUNDLE OF LETTERS, FATHER... LETTERS SUPPOSEDLY FROM ME.
WHERE DID MARGARET BRUETTE DISAPPEAR TO!?
AND WHO WROTE THE LETTERS I'VE BEEN RECEIVING!?

..THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW..
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE MARGARET WENT
GET ON THAT COACH.
A COACH WILL LEAVE FROM THE BACK GATE.
YOU'LL FIND OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW... THE TRUTH I DIDN'T TELL YOU.
THERE.
IT'LL BRING YOU TO HER.


YOU'LL LEARN EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW —
LEGLEY!
YES!
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO SEE MARGARET!?

THAT'S NOT FAIR! THAT'S NOT FAIR!!
MAIDIE.
YOU'VE GOT WORK TO DO AT HOME, DON'T YOU?
I'LL BE GONE 3 OR 4 DAYS.
TAKE ME! TAKE ME! TAKE ME!
NO, MAIDIE.
AND I'LL TELL HER HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO SEE HER.
DON'T THROW A TANTRUM. I'LL GIVE MARGARET YOUR PRESENT.
HEY, LEGLEY. BRING MARGY BACK IF YOU CAN, ALL RIGHT?
OKAY
IT'S TIME TO GO, MIGS.
YEAH!!

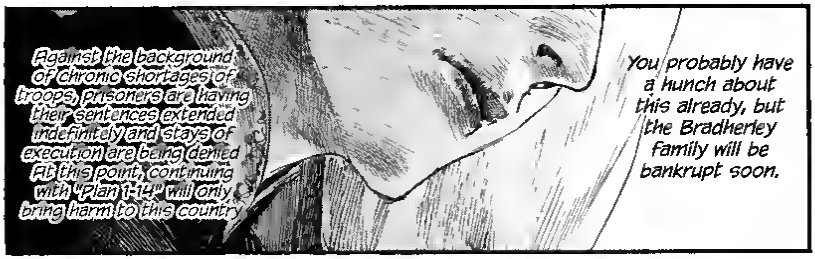

I'LL BE SO PROUD TO SEE YOU AND MARGARET TOGETHER ON STAGE...!
I'VE DREAMED ABOUT THIS...!
BYE BYE!
END

Chapter 8

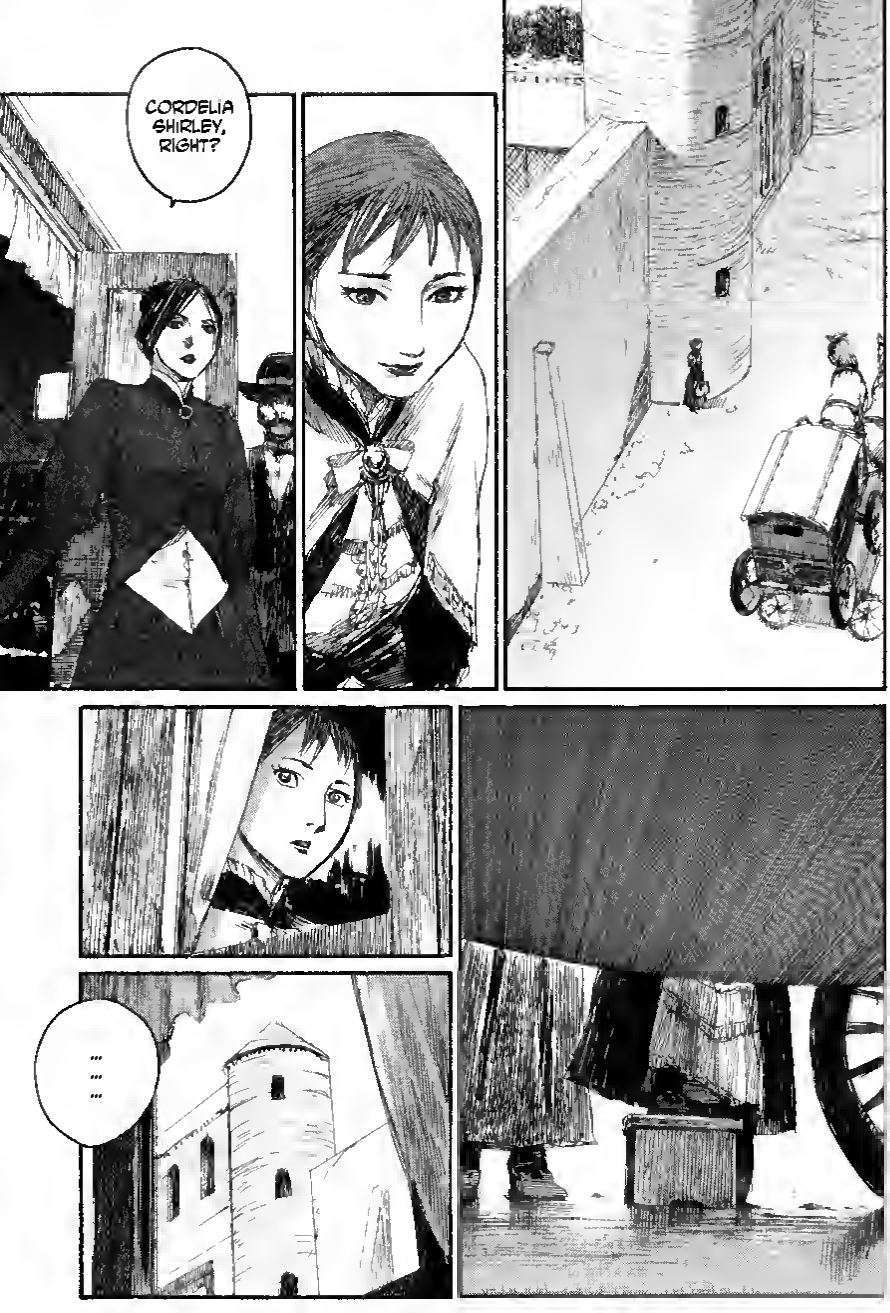
馬車と飛行船

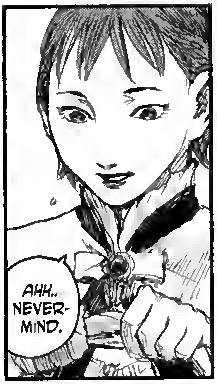
LED ZEPPELIN

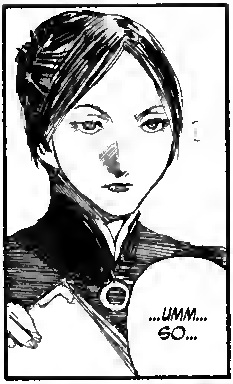
I told my desk your story yesterday. They seem to like it.
Dearest Marilla —
have you thought about what we discussed?


Against the background of chronic shortages of troops, prisoners are having their sentences extended indefinitely and stays of execution are being denied. At this point, continuing with "Plan I-14" will only bring harm to this country.
You probably have a hunch about this already, but the Bradherley family will be bankrupt soon.

I await your answer.
Matthew H.
My colleagues are all good people. I think they'll be good friends to you too.
You don't have to share in that fate. Leave the castle.

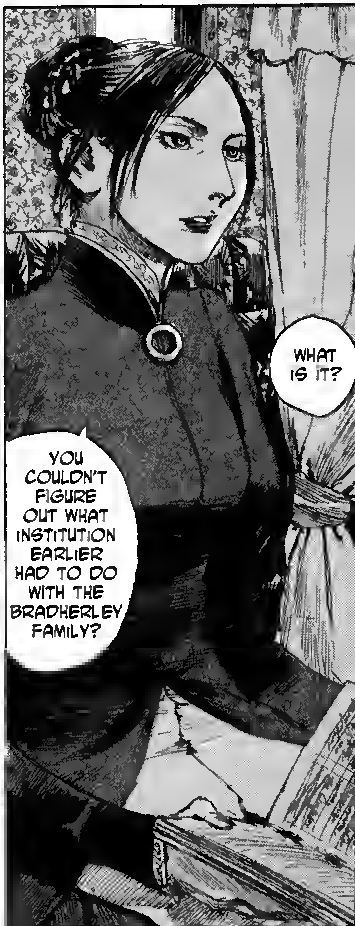

CORDELIA SHIRLEY, RIGHT?
...
...
...


AHH.. NEVER-MIND.


...UMM... SO...

WELL... SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

THAT BRADHERLEY OPERA TROUPE HASN'T PERFORMED IN 3 YEARS.
...I'VE HEARD RUMORS


WHAT IS IT?
YOU COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT INSTITUTION EARLIER HAD TO DO WITH THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY?

I'M 20 THIS YEAR... SO FROM NOW...
SINCE THE WAR STARTED, IN OTHER WORDS.
BUT STILL, I... UM...
REALLY !?
WELL, IT WAS JUST NATIONALISTIC DRIVEL, THOUGH.
YOU PLACE TOO MUCH STOCK IN RUMOR.
THEY'RE STILL PERFORMING I'VE SEEN IT MYSELF
BUT A LONG TIME AGO, JOINING THAT OPERA TROUPE USED TO BE EVERY GIRL'S DREAM.
BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER THESE DAYS, BE IT OPERA OR WHATEVER ELSE.. IT WON'T BE PERMITTED UNLESS THERE'S PROPAGANDA VALUE TO IT.

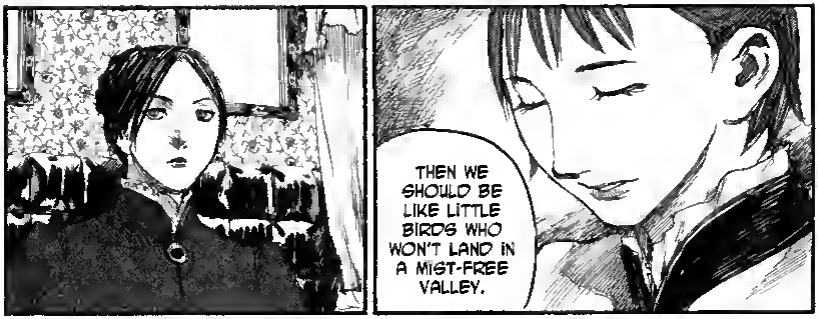
WHAT IS IT?
A ZEPPELIN.
KNOCK KNOCK

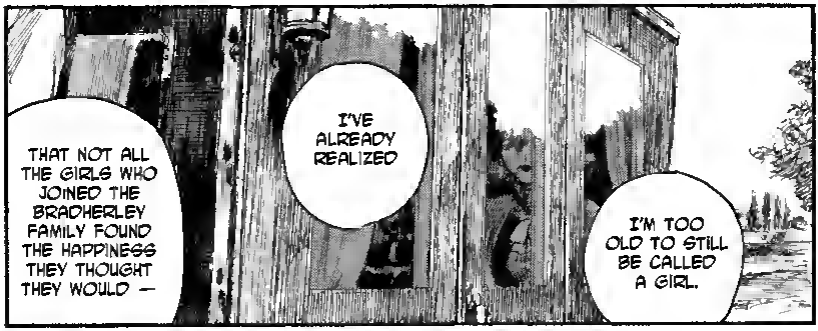
...WELL, IT SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT IF WE JUST IGNORE IT...
THERE ISN'T ANYTHING WE CAN DO, IS THERE?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO...?
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE RUN OUT OF BOMBS TO DROP
THEY'RE PROBABLY AFTER THE HARTLEY TRAIN DEPOT.
IT PROBABLY CAUSED THE LOUD ROAR WHEN WE CROSSED THE RIDGE EARLIER.
AHH, NO... WELL, A LITTLE...
ARE YOU SCARED?
WILL THE PEOPLE AT THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE BE OKAY?

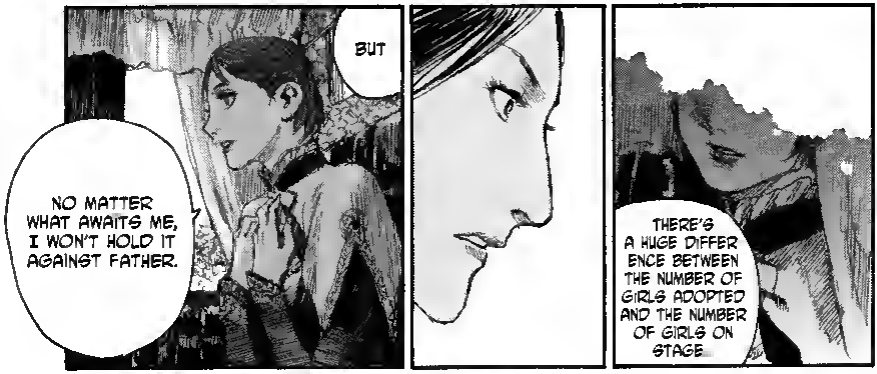
IS SHE ALL RIGHT? CAN I SEE HER?
THEY'RE SAFER THAN WE ARE.
MS BRYCE, DO YOU KNOW A GIRL NAMED DIANA?
SHE WENT TO THE CASTLE 7 YEARS AGO, I BELIEVE.
DIANA FORD..
...HMM, THAT GIRL.
WELL...

I THINK... YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE HER
BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION EITHER.
THE TROUPE DOESN'T PERFORM ANY DECENT OPERAS ANYMORE.
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.
AHH, I'M SORRY.
I REALLY... SHOULDN'T BE CRYING AT MY AGE.

A DREAM, HUH...
IT'LL BE LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE ON THE STAGE AGAIN...
THAT'S TRUE FOR NOW,
BUT I'M SURE THINGS WILL CHANGE FOR THE BETTER WHEN THE WAR ENDS.
WHO KNOWS WHAT DARK SECRETS WERE HIDDEN IN THAT MIST...
TO THE NOBILITY, OPERA WAS LIKE A MIST.
ALL THEY GAVE US WAS A DREAM—
IN TIMES LIKE THIS, NONE OF THE NOBLE FAMILIES CAN KEEP THEIR HANDS CLEAN.
?
THEY DON'T EVEN REALIZE HOW CLOSE
THEY ARE TO DESTRUC-TION EITHER...


THEN WE SHOULD BE LIKE LITTLE BIRDS WHO WON'T LAND IN A MIST-FREE VALLEY.

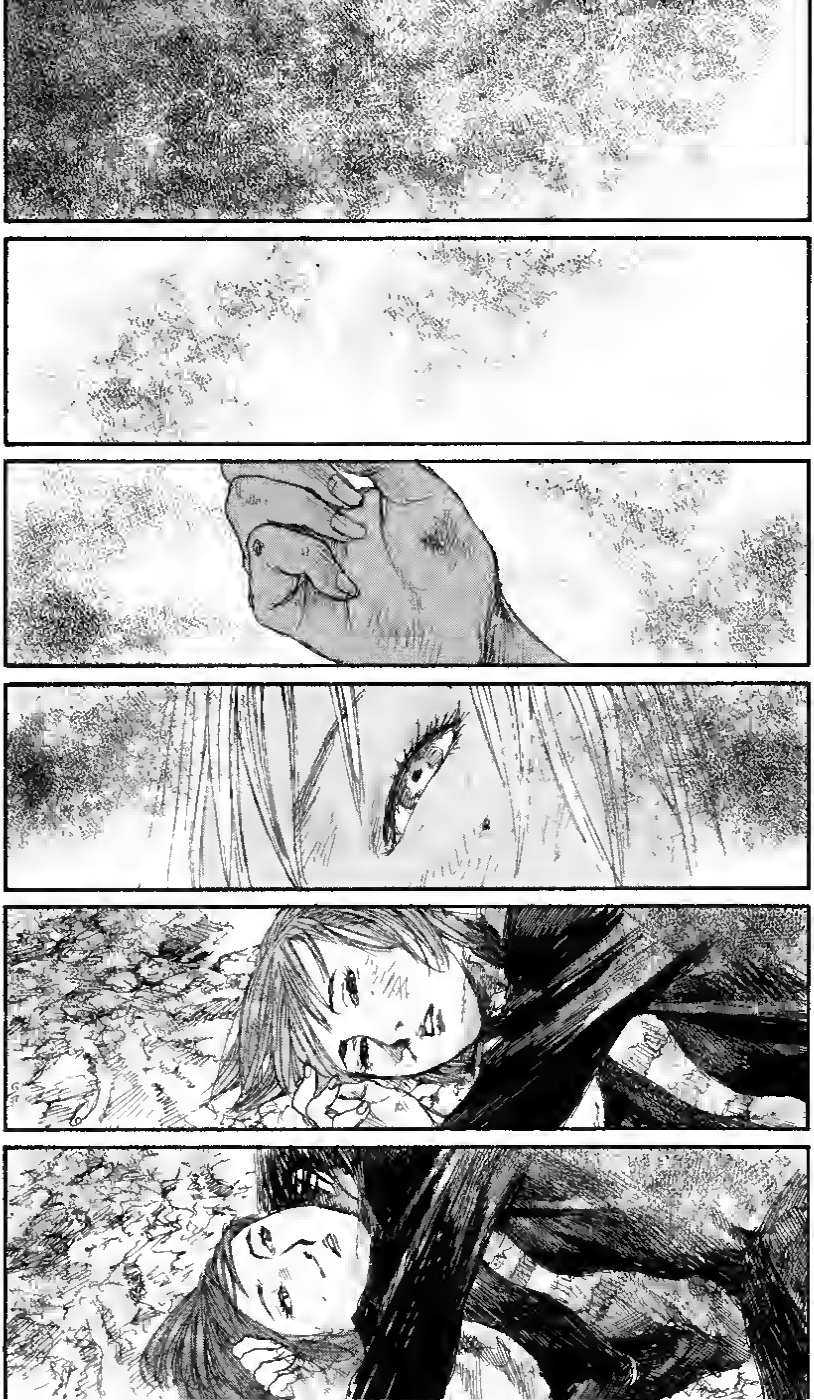

THAT NOT ALL THE GIRLS WHO JOINED THE BRADHERLEY FAMILY FOUND THE HAPPINESS THEY THOUGHT THEY WOULD —
I'VE ALREADY REALIZED
I'M TOO OLD TO STILL BE CALLED A GIRL.


NO MATTER WHAT AWAITS ME, I WON'T HOLD IT AGAINST FATHER.
BUT
THERE'S A HUGE DIFFER ENCE BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF GIRLS ADOPTED AND THE NUMBER OF GIRLS ON STAGE.

I'VE BEEN BLESSED THESE LAST 8 YEARS.

THERE WASN'T ANYTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN THAT.
IT'S NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT IT WAS JUST AMAZING.
THAT'S HOW IT IS FOR US ORPHANS, RIGHT?
EVERYONE ONLY TALKS ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO DO IF THEY JOIN THE OPERA TROUPE.
WE'D SPEND EVERYDAY BEING CAREFREE AND TALKING ABOUT NOTHING BUT THAT.
I HAVEN'T SEEN MANY OPERAS
BUT THAT'S WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE IN AN ORPHANAGE ...
HEE HEE... BUT WELL, TO TELL THE TRUTH,
AND I NATURALLY GREW TO LOVE IT AS WELL BECAUSE OF THAT.
SHE USED TO TELL ME IN DETAIL AGAIN AND AGAIN WHAT SHE LIKED ABOUT IT.
MY LATE MOTHER LOVED OPERA.

"FIDELIO"
"ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO"
"CANAAN"
EVEN THOUGH I'D NEVER SEEN SOME OF THE OPERAS, IMAGES OF THEM FILLED MY HEAD.
THE ICE LADY FERGIE MEINHEIT
MARGARITA CORNEJO
GRICENE NOIR
THE SINGERS TOO...
MS ORQUIDEA...



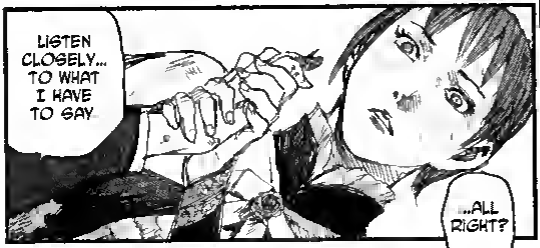
...I'LL GO GET A DOCTOR.
...IT'S FINE
DON'T YOU...
BESIDES... YOU ALREADY KNOW...
IT'S SEVERAL MILES... TO THE NEAREST VILLAGE...
...AT LEAST LET ME INFORM SOMEONE AT THE CASTLE...
...DON'T BOTHER...

CORDELIA.
THAT COACH WASN'T GOING TO THE BRADHERLEY CASTLE.

IT'D BE... THIS FAST...
I JUST... DIDN'T THINK...

...I WANTED TO BRING AN END TO THIS... BEFORE I DIED...

HEH HEH...
...
...

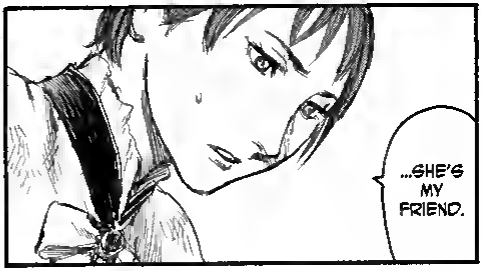

LISTEN CLOSELY... TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
...ALL RIGHT?

YOU
WERE BROUGHT... TO THAT FACILITY EARLIER FOR A "FESTIVAL"...
BUT... THIS YEAR... THE GOVERNMENT SUSPENDED IT THERE...
A FESTIVAL ?
A STUPID FESTIVAL... IT DOESN'T AFFECT... WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NEXT.
IT'S COMPLICATED.. I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT WELL.. NOT IN MY CURRENT STATE.
BUT WHAT HAPPENED... WAS THAT YOU.. WERE SUPPOSED TO BE SENT... TO ANOTHER PLACE FOR THE NEXT FESTIVAL...
BUT THINGS GOT CONFUSED... BECAUSE OF THE WAR...
HEH HEH HEH... GEEZE...
EVEN AT A TIME... LIKE THIS... THEY'RE STILL TRYING TO HOLD FESTIVALS... HEH HEH..
MS BRYCE... DON'T SPEAK...
COUGH COUGH
... CORDELIA.

I HAVE TO KNOW...
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE GIRLS WHO DON'T MAKE IT TO THE STAGE.
— YES.
THE CASTLE — DO YOU WANT TO JOIN THE BRACHERLEY FAMILY...?

YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL....

THAT DIANA... NEVER WENT ON STAGE... THESE PAST 7 YEARS...
...SO YOU NOTICED... HUH...

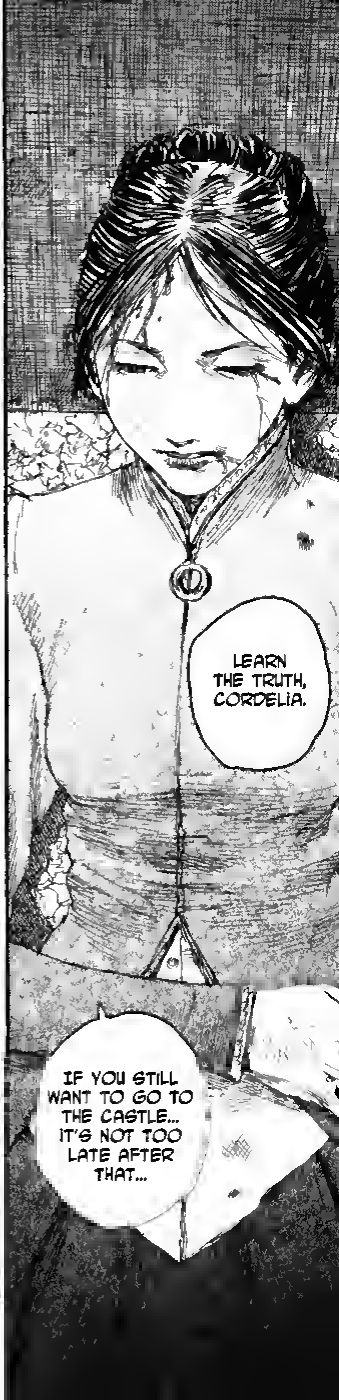

...SHE'S MY FRIEND.

TAKE IT
TO THE EMMETT NEWSPAPER COMPANY IN WEST GRIMM...
...HERE.
HE REALLY WANTS... WHAT'S IN THAT BOOK...
IF HE... READS IT...
THERE'S A JOURNALIST NAMED MATTHEW HULBERT THERE.. GIVE IT TO HIM...
YOU CAN TRUST HIM...
YOU'LL SOON LEARN...
WHAT HAPPENED... TO DIANA.

GO.
THE ZEPPELINS... HAVE GONE.

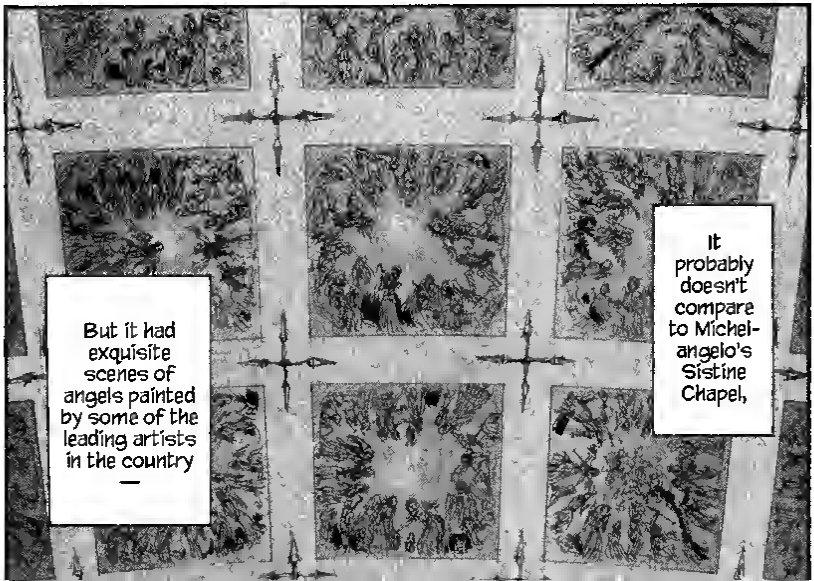
FOR YOU
THE DREAM... IS ENDING...

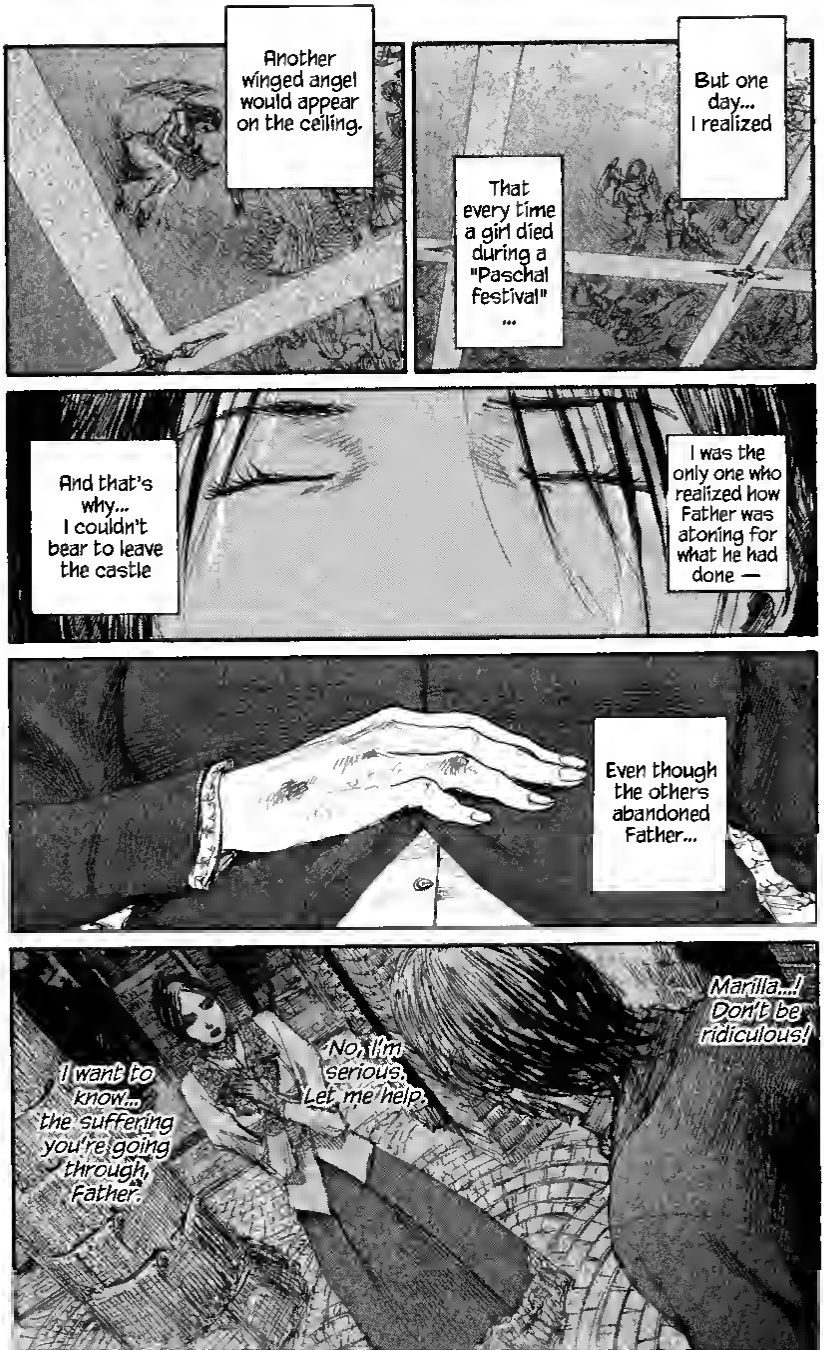
AND FOR THE NOBILITY ...
AND... FOR ME...


IF YOU STILL WANT TO GO TO THE CASTLE... IT'S NOT TOO LATE AFTER THAT...
LEARN THE TRUTH, CORDELIA.

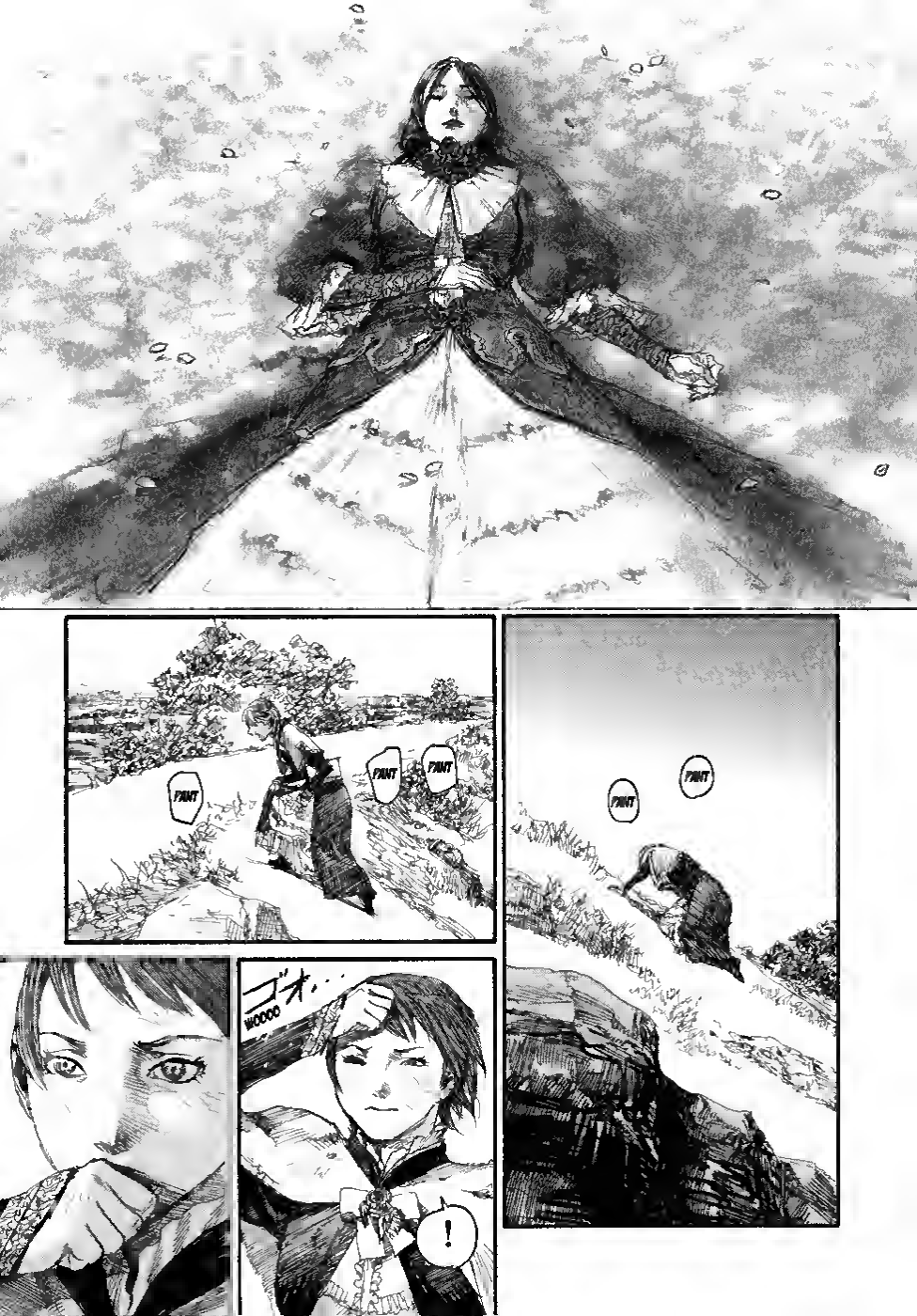
MARILLA ...
MS BRYCE ...
AT LEAST... TELL ME YOUR FIRST NAME.
MS MARILLA ORQUIDEA! YOU'RE...!
MARILLA...
REMEMBER THAT NAME..
THANK YOU.

...I loved to look at the ceiling in Father's room —


But it had exquisite scenes of angels painted by some of the leading artists in the country —
It probably doesn't compare to Michel-angelo's Sistine Chapel,


Another winged angel would appear on the ceiling.
But one day... I realized
That every time a girl died during a "Paschal festival" ...
And that's why... I couldn't bear to leave the castle
I was the only one who realized how Father was atoning for what he had done —
Even though the others abandoned Father...
Marilia...! Don't be ridiculous!
No, I'm serious. Let me help.
I want to know... the suffering you're going through, Father.

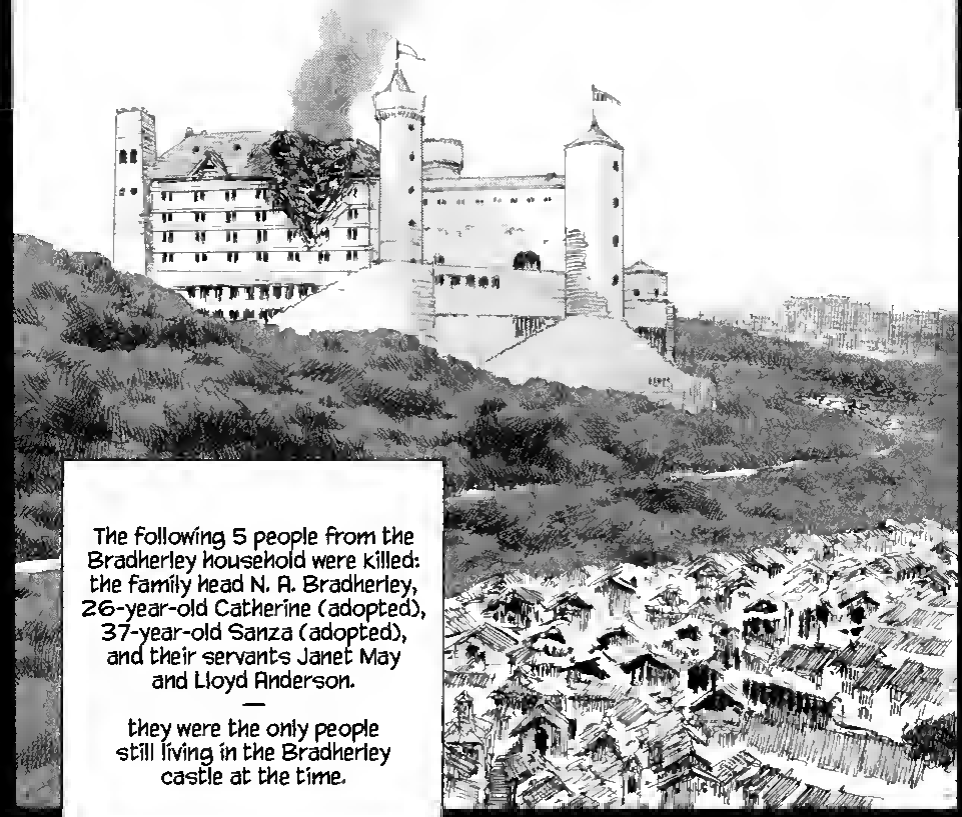
Thank you, Father.
Sure, this is your home, come back if the winds of war burn out to be true, there'll be fighting where you are now.
Such a shame about Jarvis. She's still young though.
Stop it, she's not really that kind of girl.
That's great! Hopefully this will stop her from fooling around again!
I heard that Jarvis got betrothed to John Gryce! Is it true!?
Hahaha, nice to meet you too. I'm Marilla. This is Margarita. And next to her...
Dear sisters... i-it's nice to meet you! My name's Catherine formerly Catherine Avery!
Ahh... Gris! I'll never forget today for the rest of my life! How many people do you think were there!?
You're spacing out again, Marilla!
Thank you!
Thank you, Matthew!
That's great! You're the first from the Gables orphanage! That's my sister! Congrats, Marilla!
Hey, I heard you've been chosen!?


PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
ゴオ…
WOOOO
!

May 1917. Cabinet unanimously voted to scrap Plan 1-14, commonly known as the "Paschal festival".

They decided swiftly after being warned that a small newspaper company had caught wind of it and planned to make it public after the war ended.

Some years later,
in 1942 —
an Allied plane returning
from a bombing run
crashed into the
Bradherley castle.
The 2 pilots and
several people in the
castle were killed.



The following 5 people from the Bradherley household were killed: the family head N. A. Bradherley, 26-year-old Catherine (adopted), 37-year-old Sanza (adopted), and their servants Janet May and Lloyd Anderson.

—

they were the only people still living in the Bradherley castle at the time.

END

Afterword

Hello. I'm Hiroaki Samura, Japan's flakiest manga artist.

I started writing this manga after I got sucked into the Anne books about 3 years ago and declared to my editor that I'd do a manga series about someone like the redheaded Anne. But as you can see, I didn't follow through at all.
And *hmm*, how should I put this. I started out wanting to do an erotic manga, but the sex scenes started decreasing midway through, and by the end I didn't really know what I wanted to write.

About the title

I had a long discussion with my editor on this. We agreed that it should be called "So-and-so's Coach" because the coach played a major part throughout. But that sounded really plain, so we agreed that "So-and-so" had to be a name so damn cool that it'd make your nose bleed. In the end, we settled on "Bradherley's Coach".
I think it's pretty cool, but not so cool that it'd cause nosebleeds.

About the setting

Doing research is a pain — uh, due to various reasons, I didn't specify which country the story was set in. So please assume it's somewhere in Western Europe with a British-style parliament. It wasn't explained in the manga that individual prisons were allowed to decide when to hold their "Paschal festival". But that's why it was early spring in one story but mid-winter in another. It wasn't because of the climate in different locations — the seasons were actually different.

About the coach

I got the idea to draw the coaches in the manga with metal wheels wrapped in rubber from the Canadian version of "Anne of Green Gables". I found out later that the movie was a Canadian TV series edited into a 3 hour movie, and I guess it might not be the most authoritative of sources... There are bits in the manga where the wheels might look more like spoked tires than rubber-lined wheels, but I assure you that you're just seeing things.

In drawing "Bradherley's Coach", I was shocked to discover that I had no talent whatsoever for designing dresses. But I had fun drawing them anyway.

As for kimonos, I'm kinda bored—

Next, I'd like to do a manga about a female high school student (perfect in her summer uniform, chest ribbon, and black socks) who gets kidnapped and taken somewhere in a coach.